

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

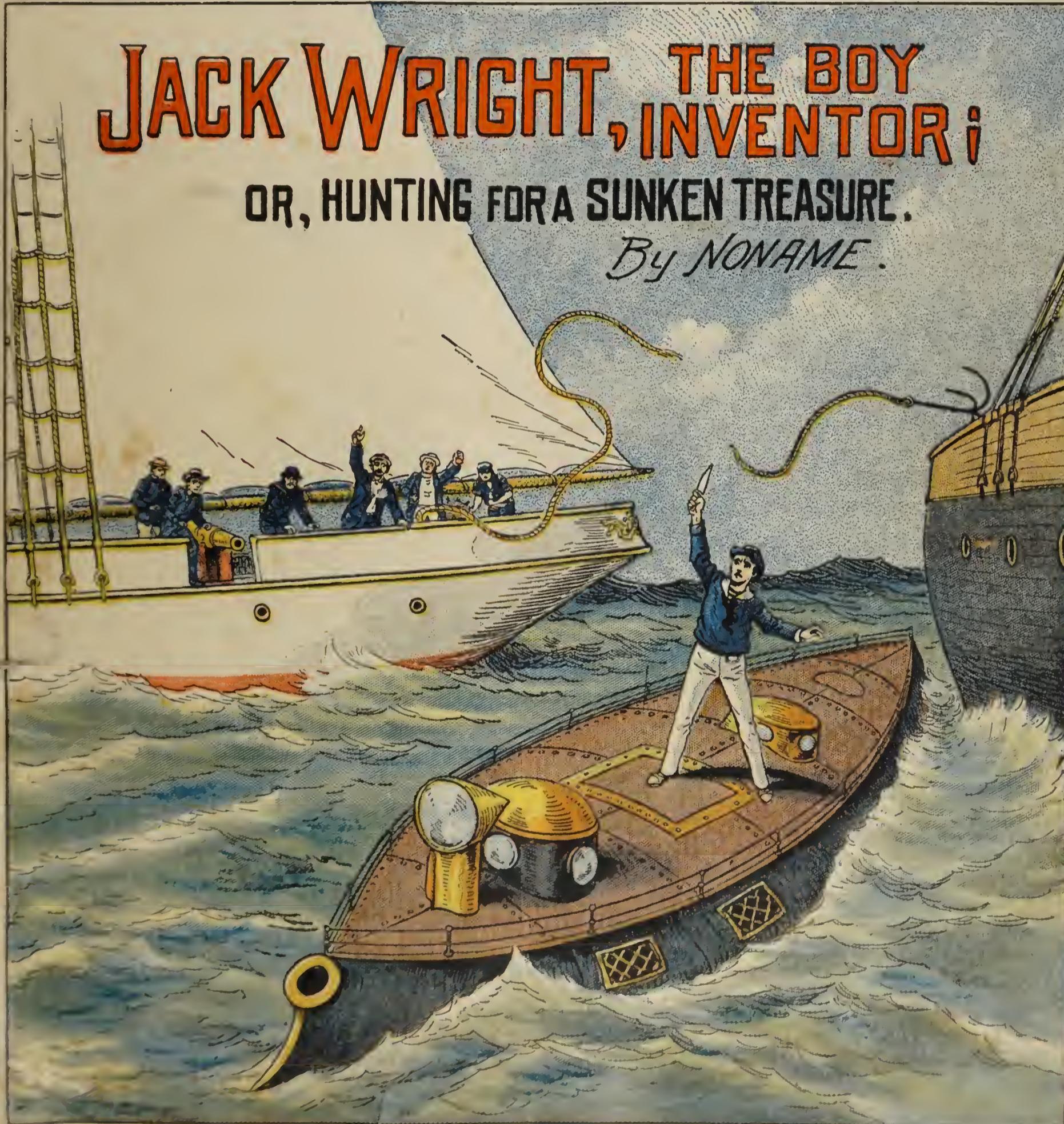
No. 187.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 1, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT, THE BOY INVENTOR; OR, HUNTING FOR A SUNKEN TREASURE.

By NONAME.



The other vessel sailed up close to the boat in tow and the crew flung over a grapnel line. No sooner was it fast, however, when Jack cast off the towline and dashed the Sea Spider between the ships, cut the grapple hawser and circled around the treasure boat.

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CHAPTER I.

THE THREE ADVENTURES

The scene opens on May 7th, 188—, in the fisher village of Wrightstown, at the head of a small bay on the Atlantic sea-coast.

It consisted of a number of pretty, vine-clad cottages, scattered among which were numerous seine nets, oars, ropes andails, while off shore there rolled at anchor a flotilla of fishing smacks.

On the bank of a creek that ran in from the bay stood a pretty house, in a neat plot of ground, having a large workshop down at the end of the garden at the creek side.

It had been owned and occupied by a widower with one son, called Mad Bill Wright, after which the village was named.

He had been a sailor, but inheriting a fortune he retired from the sea, and began to invent, by the aid of his son, a submarine boat with which he intended to explore the bottom of the ocean in search of a fabulous treasure, the location of which he professed to know.

Every one of the inhabitants had set him down for a madman, but he paid no heed to his neighbor's sneers, and finished the model which he had been working on for several years.

Unfortunately, poor Bill Wright had no sooner completed his model and seen it work successfully when he became sick, and died before he could consummate his cherished project.

His son Jack thus came into possession of the model and his father's cash, an ancient parchment with Spanish writing upon it, and a dying request of his father to build a boat after the plan of the model, and go in search of the treasure.

Jack was all alone in the world now, a sturdy boy of nineteen, with a fine figure, flashing black eyes, and a stock of courage, ambition, and inventive power that were marvelous.

On the day when our story opens he left the cottage in care of a faithful old housekeeper and went through the village toward the sea shore, when he was accosted by a tall, portly man in a high silk hat and handsome clothes.

He was a wealthy gentleman who controlled all the fishing industries of the village and lived in a large, handsome mansion in the back of the village.

"Hello, Jack!" said he. "Where are you going?"

The boy started, glanced around at the man, and then paused and frowned at him, for he was one of the foremost men to ridicule his father's invention.

Jack accordingly disliked him most cordially.

"Who is that you, Mr. Middleton?" asked the boy.

"I have heard that your maniac father has died."

"Your father is dead, sir," coldly replied the boy.

"That that! It's just as well he died. But he was a harm-
less lunatic and only wanted his own money on his crack-
pot scheme," growled the rich man.
"Shiver me, lad." The old sailor was crying, as he wiped the dirt from his face. "This ain't fair, nohow! I'd fight

dark eyes flashing fire, "but my father was as sane as you, and knew enough to mind his own business."

"There—there! What a spitfire you are, 'pon my word. Don't get excited. Did he leave you anything besides the model of his impossible boat upon which to exist?"

"He left me money enough to finish the work he began," replied the boy shortly.

"What! Do you mean to say you intend to throw away good money upon such a mad scheme as that?"

"Ten thousand dollars, if necessary."

"You are as crazy as your father was."

"I will make you change your opinion of us before I am done," replied Jack angrily.

"I doubt it," blandly said Mr. Middleton, stroking his gray beard, and sharply eyeing the boy. "At any rate, if you should ever make anything of the boat I'll give you a chance to test it, and at the same time make a thousand dollars."

"You will—how?" demanded Jack interestedly.

"Why, don't you remember my ship, the Happy Fan?"

"The one that was wrecked on the Devil's Jaws rocks?"

"Yes—out in the bay yonder."

"Well?"

"She lies so deep and in such awful currents that no diver can reach her. However, if your boat could do all that your father claimed for it, I'm sure you ought to be able to get down to the bark, and rescue a box of valuable papers for me from the captain's cabin."

"You will pay me a thousand dollars for the box?"

"I will. The papers are worth ten times as much to me."

"Mr. Middleton, I shall get those papers for you."

A sarcastic laugh burst from the man's lips.

He did not believe Jack could do as he claimed.

The young inventor felt chagrined.

But just as he was about to say what he thought of the gentleman's doubt about the matter, he heard a chorus of shouts down a side street at the railroad depot, and glancing in the direction of the sounds he beheld a crowd of men and boys in fishermen's costumes.

They were surrounding a rather curious looking man, and while some were teasing and tantalizing him unmercifully others were pelting him with missiles, and several were amusing themselves by throwing him down by pulling from under him a wooden leg he wore.

The man was apparently about forty years of age, attired in the full rig of a man-of-war's marine.

He was wildly expostulating with his tormentors, but they laughed and jeered at him, and continued their mean, cruel pranks, paying no attention to his entreaties.

A look of anger crossed Jack's face.

"Cowardly hounds!" he muttered. "I'll lend the old sailor a hand, and teach them to leave him alone!"

He paid no further attention to Mr. Middleton, but ran toward the crowd, and ran up to the old sailor.

"Shiver me, lad." The old sailor was crying, as he wiped the dirt from his face. "This ain't fair, nohow! I'd fight

any two craft in ther fleet o' yer, but dash my top-lights if so be as I kin broach up ag'in a hull flotilla."

"What's the matter?" Jack asked of him.

The old sailor glanced at Jack with one eye, for the other one was made of glass, and after a keen survey, he said:

"Lord, I just hove in this port under full sail from ther train from New York, an' that 'ere unmannerly gang o' lubbers began firin' a broadside at me the moment I anchored. An' as soon's I returned the fire, they bore down on me fore an' aft, an' they've near stove me in from bow ter stern."

Jack saw that the funny look of the old sailor had aroused the mischief in the crowd, and he turned to them, and holding up his hand, he shouted:

"I want you to leave this old man be, or I'll lend him a hand myself. You ought to be ashamed; he is a cripple."

"You mind your own business!" yelled one of the men.

"Go for the madman's crazy son!" shouted another.

And with a whizz another shower of missiles flew toward both the boy and the old sailor, bombarding them like rain.

Jack became exasperated, for he saw that their assailants were composed of the worst people in the village.

"Stop!" he shouted. "It will be the worse for you if you don't."

A jeering yell was their response, and another volley of missiles came flying at Jack and his companion.

The boy's patience gave out, and he ran straight into the midst of the crowd and reached out for them.

A startling scene followed.

Every one with whom the boy's hand came in contact fell, as if he had delivered them the most powerful blows, yelling that they were killed, and falling as if struck by lightning.

Swiftly the boy went among them, and those who did not come in contact with him fled at full speed, terrified by witnessing the terrific power Jack seemed to wield.

The ones he floored scrambled to their feet and ran away, horrified at the very sight of the young avenger, and utterly unable to comprehend what an appalling force he possessed.

"He's a devil!" gasped one.

"His hands felt like knives cuttin' me!" said another.

And within a few moments the crowd had dispersed, and Jack smilingly returned to the old sailor, who was looking at him in amazement with his solitary eye.

"They're gone now," said the boy cheerfully, "and I guess I have given them a lesson they won't forget very soon."

"Dash me!" gasped the old sailor, gaping at Jack, "what sort o' craft are you, anyway, lad? It looked as if yer flipper wuz thunderbolts, ther way yer floundered them ere ugly pirates."

Jack laughed quietly, and held up his hands.

They were now covered with rubber gloves, and in each one he held the poles of a powerful electric battery that he carried concealed in his pocket, and said:

"I'll explain. I simply shocked them with electricity. The battery I carry is small enough to put in my pocket, but it is powerful enough to knock a man down, as I have prepared it after an invention of my own."

"Oh," said the old sailor, with a nod, "I see."

But although the matter seemed to be easily understood by him, he really did not understand much about it at all.

"Well, as your tormentors are gone, you had better go where you are bound for before they return."

"Aye, now, but I ain't got no bearin's for my port."

"Where do you want to go to?"

"Bill Wright's."

"Why, that is my father."

"Good law, ye don't tell me, lad!" gasped the ancient mariner, as he gripped Jack's hand. "An' I'm glad to know ye."

He was grateful to the boy, and shook his hand heartily.

"Are you Timothy Topstay, my father's old messmate, when he was aboard the U. S. frigate Wabash?"

"Sure guns, lad," said the old sailor, beamingly, as he stumbled along the street with Jack. "I'm ther old hulk as wuz a-comin' ter sling my hammock in yer father's cabin fer a while. Ye see, Sailor's Snug Harbor wuz nice enough fer any ole feller wot got his weather eye shot out, an' his walkin' tackle blowed off in ther war, aboard the Wabash, but this trip would be a change o' quarters an' make sailin' ter Davy Jones' locker easier fer me."

He wiped a tear from his eye, and his voice grew choked and hoarse, for the poor cripple felt as if his cruise of usefulness in this life was about over forever.

Jack felt sorry for him from the bottom of his heart.

"I have often heard my poor father speak o' you, Tim," said the boy, "but he will not be at home now to welcome you."

"Why, lad, has my dear old friend Bill gone away—"

"He is dead."

The old sailor started violently.

He shot a startled glance at the boy, and paused.

"Dead!" he faltered, in pained tones.

Jack gave him an account of the event, and he looked sad and solemn, and wanted to turn back to go home again to Snug Harbor, but Jack said:

"No, no! You must come home with me, Tim, and I will show you the model of my father's submarine vessel, and see what you think of it."

"Aye, now, lad," replied Tim gladly, "I'd like ter clap my eyes on it, 'cause it's all as is left o' my poor ole messmate, an', 'sides that, these ole timbers ain't so sprung in ther garboards yet but what anythin' what's got ter do wi' ships is ther most interestin' thing there is in ther Lor' blessed world."

The boy then escorted his new friend homeward.

Just as they were about to turn the corner into the street that led to Jack's cottage, a young individual rushed around the corner toward them, and collided with the old sailor with such force that they both fell to the ground.

Up into the air flew a carpet bag carried by the stranger, and his old green umbrella shot over a fence, while he himself described a curve upon the back of his neck, and turning a somersault, he landed on his hands and knees.

Tim lay stranded upon the broad of his back, with his wooden leg stuck up in the air, and the stranger's cap on top of it.

"Och! Donnerwetter! Vot's der matter?" panted the stranger, as his round blue eyes glared out of his round fat face at the sailor, and his exceedingly fat stomach brushed the ground. "Vy you didn't got out of mine vay already?"

The sailor gave a grunt, sat up, and returned the stranger's glare.

He was a Dutch immigrant to all appearances, no more than twenty years of age, and attired in a suit of brown homespun garments, with a belt around his waist that made his coat stick out like a ballet dancer's dress, while his short pants scarcely reached his ankles, and amply displayed a pair of enormous feet encased in hobnailed brogans.

He bounced upon his feet, and Jack saw that he was a very short, pudgy little fellow of a hot-headed temperament, and as the tall, thin, old sailor arose, too, he towered over the little Dutchman by a height of several feet.

"Avast thar," said Tim, "it was you as ran afoul me."

"Yah, I didn't vonet," sputtered the fat boy pugnaciously, "und if I didn't already, vot's der medder mit you, maybe, heh?"

He danced up to Tim with a scowl, and shook his fist up at the grinning sailor as if he meant to fight him.

"Come along," said Jack, with a laugh. "It's all an accident. Shake hands; neither of you could help it."

"Yes, now so it was," assented Tim, extending his hand. "Well," said the Dutch boy, shaking the proffered hand, "his good humor was restored, "maybe I don't petter fight mit you alretty, 'cause I might hurt mineself."

"What brought you around the corner in such a hurry?" asked Jack, picking up the boy's cap and handing it to him.

"Some beobles vot is a growd came along," explained the boy. "Und dey set somedings to me vot I don't like, somemore. I pegged vun of dem in de snoot mit a stone und dey all vended for me vot made me skoodid."

"A gang of men and boys?" questioned Jack.

"Yah—dot is it."

"Then you are a stranger here?"

"For shure I vhas, maybe. I don't got some money, und I vant to walk by some city vere I got me a shob mit dot electricity pisness—dot is mine drade."

"Oh, you are an electrician?" eagerly asked Jack.

"Dot is so."

"Would you like to work for me?"

"I vould work anywhere for mine lifin'."

"Then you are just the fellow for me," said Jack eagerly. "I am going to construct an electric boat for going under the water, and I need just such a person as you are to assist me. Where do you live?"

"I don't got me some home alretty," replied the Dutch boy, "cause I yust come from dot Boston."

"You can live with me then, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Fritz Schneider," supplemented the boy, with a nod. "Dot will do. I lief mit your house, und dot seddles id vonct."

"You will see what there is to be done soon, then," said Jack, "and as we are going there now, you may as well come along, Fritz."

"Yah, but I don't want to go dat vay," said the young Dutchman, holding back, as Jack was going to turn the corner."

"Why not?" queried the young inventor, in surprise.

"Dem mens down dot street."

"No, they are gone now," said Jack, looking around the corner.

"Och, but dey vhas down to dot leedle house mit de pig parn by de back. I vhas heard dem say dot dey go dere yust for spite, und smash up a boat vot some veller made who yust licked dem by de street."

Jack gave a start and glance at Tim.

A fearful fit of alarm took possession of him.

It was evident by the Dutch boy's declaration that the ruffians from whom Jack had rescued Tim were going to go to the inventor's house and break into the workshop and destroy the model of the under-water vessel.

A chill of dismay passed over Jack, and he cast a quick, apprehensive glance in the direction of his home.

To his alarm he saw his late enemies going into the grounds in a body, and proceeding toward the workshop.

"Fritz has told the truth!" he gasped.

"Lord have us!" muttered the old sailor aghast.

"Yes? Is dat your house?" queried the surprised Fritz.

"Yes. Their spite will ruin the work of years, and forever destroy my hope of carrying out my dead father's wishes."

The sad, pathetic tones of the despairing boy struck a chill to the hearts of his two listeners, won their sympathy, and aroused their anger at the ruffians.

"Do you think they don't?" quickly asked Fritz.

"Aye?" said Tim. "An' by gosh, we'll help you."

"I will—excuse me, but I'm burning and my check is out of my pocketbook. Perhaps we may arrive there in

time yet. They have got to break the lock to get in the door. Come on, and we will try to save it."

And so saying, the desperate young inventor dashed away, followed by his two companions, and rushed through the street at full speed to prevent the mob from destroying the model in their petty malice against him.

It was not a great distance they had to cover, yet so suspenseful was the moment that it seemed ages to Jack ere he reached the yard and dashed through the gate.

He heard his enemies showering blow after blow upon the door of the workshop, and the lock yielded.

Open crashed the door a moment later, and into the workshop rushed the crowd.

Jack's heart almost ceased beating, so excited was he.

"Will I arrive in time? Oh, heavens, will I arrive in time?" he gasped in choking tones, as he sped along.

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGE OLD MANUSCRIPT.

Jack and his two friends dashed into the workshop, and found the big room filled with men.

On a stand in the middle of the room rested the ten-foot model of a submarine boat, and several of the gang had armed themselves with axes, crowbars and other utensils, with which they were about to demolish it.

Jack pulled a pistol from his pocket, and aiming it at the men, he shouted in stern tones:

"Hold, there! The first man who touches it will die!"

Hastily the men glanced around at the boy standing in the doorway, and they were startled to see that he was aiming a revolver at them.

Instantly they recoiled from the model.

Jack was as cool as ice, but Tim and Fritz, who stood beside him, were so much excited they wanted to fight right away.

"Run 'em down, an' scuttle 'em!" roared the old sailor, brandishing a spade he had picked up in the garden.

"Hit dem by der het!" raved Fritz, picking up a cobble stone.

"Don't fire! Don't shoot!" whined one of the attacking party.

A contemptuous look crossed Jack's face, and he exclaimed:

"So you call this revenge for what I did to you?"

"We didn't do nuthin'," said one of the men.

"No, because I arrived in time to prevent you; but you would have spoiled that model to spite me. I'd serve you right by shooting you down like dogs."

At this half menace the men began to climb out of the windows, run out of another door, and try to screen their bodies behind the different objects in the room.

Jack moved away from the door.

"Get out of here!" said he, drawing out his watch and glancing at it. "I give you just two minutes to vacate the premises. Any one who remains after that gets shot."

Glad of the chance to escape so easily, the foiled rascals fled, and emptied the building in one minute.

In another minute the whole crowd was racing away from the grounds at the top of their speed.

As soon as the last one was gone Jack burst out laughing, and the hearty tones of his voice became so infectious that Fritz and Tim had to laugh, too.

"That's the last of them now," said Jack, very much relieved.

"Aye, I'd but why didn't ye blow n hole in their tools?"

"Ouchder proke der chaw for dem," said Fritz.

"Had I injured them," said Jack, "they might have come back some time and burned down the workshop."

"Then they'd roast me an' this Dutch lubber," said Tim, grimly; "cause as long's him an' me swings our hammocks here, we was in this shop, eh, Fritz?"

"Dot is so," assented the emigrant.

"Well, for my account, the greater part of my time will be spent here, too," said Jack, "for to-morrow I begin to commence the construction of my submarine boat."

He showed them a room full of sheets of steel and framework moldings that were cast at various iron foundries, according to the specifications that he and his father had drawn up, and bringing them into another room, exhibited the strange machinery designed to work the boat.

The shop was fitted up with every tool and device for the construction of the boat, and the model being shown to the two strangers, aroused their admiration and delight over the beauty of its arrangement.

"Dash my figger-head, but it's a marvel!" said Tim, enthusiastically, stamping his wooden peg on the floor and slapping his thigh; "but ha' ye tried the model!"

"Certainly," replied Jack, cheerily. "My father and I sent a cat, a rabbit, and a canary down under the creek in it, and they came up alive and acting as if nothing had occurred to them extraordinary. The boat acted any way we designed, and is sure to work right built on a large scale. We can store enough compressed air to last six men two weeks in the reservoirs of the big boat, and the arrangement of the air chambers and water reservoirs in such that the boat can be made to dive to any desired depth and move there horizontally in any direction. Nor can the fiercest tides rend the hull to pieces, so strong is the framework."

The old sailor and Fritz were so much interested in the singular boat that they both wanted to help Jack to build it at once, and averred that they would go with him on its trial trip, if not in search of the sunken treasure.

When the inspection was over they retired to the house, and having had their supper one of the rooms in the workshop was turned into a bedroom for the sailor and Dutchman, who preferred it to the house, and while the housekeeper was so employed, Jack brought his now-found friends into the parlor.

There he showed them the strange manuscript which had incited his father to invent the boat.

It was a long, narrow piece of parchment, on which was traced some Spanish writing of an ancient style.

Some of it was so faded and blurred that it was impossible to read it; but the main part was easily decipherable, and a fly sheet attached to it contained a translation into English of what the writing said:

"Vere your fader got him dot?" queried Fritz, when he had finished looking over the parchment.

"It is an heirloom, and has been in our family many years," replied the boy. "All of my ancestors were sailors. My father said that one of them procured it from a dying messmate, who was one of the crew of the treasure ship."

"Who was he?" asked Tim.

"Evidently the captain. I'll read it to you."

The others assenting, Jack read aloud the following translation:

AT SEA IN AN OPEN BOAT.

"In the name of Almighty God, to whom we commend our souls, amen. Fearing momentary death in the stormy seas, I write this in hope that it may survive us to tell the tale of our misfortune. The two galleons, Alpha and Omega, did set sail from Cadiz, laden with a rich treasure of one million doubloons, and put out to sea upon the 10th day of March,

in the year of our Lord, 1688, and set sail for the coast of Brittany, under my command. The money was designed to pay part of the national debt. Strong seas arose after the third day, and although we did make every effort to overcome the furious winds and waves, we were blown far away from our course into the western coast of Africa. Both ships were locked together by stout cables, but we were half demolished, and well knew that it was hopeless to expect to save them. * * * All hope was gone, for our ships were sinking off an island on the coast, and in despair we have taken to the boats, and seen the galleons sink before our eyes in the storm, with all their treasure. * * * To distinguish the location of the wreckage is difficult in this dead gloom which only breaks when the lightning's forked tongues flash athwart the murky heavens. Yet we catch faint glimpses, as we rise and fall on the waves in our frail boat, of the land from which the wind keeps blowing us. It contained a mountain of great height, which, split in two at the summit, gives it the strange look of the cloven hoof of a cow, and from the cleft emanates fire and smoke. It is due west, seaward, perhaps one league of this strange isle that the ships did founder. I can say no more, for the turbid seas wash over us, but will put this note in a copper cylinder attached to a float and cast it into the sea. Some crew of a passing ship may find it, and if so be God's will, though we may perish on the sea, it may yet be known what has become of us. May Heaven defend us.

Santa Garcia, Commander."

When Jack finished reading the manuscript he put it away in a drawer, and then said to his companions:

"It may seem strange to you that my father pinned his faith on such a meagre account, yet he did. Experts have pronounced this paper genuine, and it is a well-known fact to the Spanish Government that the account was true. Yet strong tides and deep seas prevented different divers who went to save the five millions of dollars from the deep from accomplishing their design."

"Then yer knows whar the islan' is?" queried Tim.

"Yes; it isn't mapped, but I've got charts and diagrams of my father's which explain everything."

"Fife million tollars!" muttered Fritz, fairly astounded.

"A vast fortune," assented Jack, "and if my boat is a success, if you both will venture to go with me on the under-water trip, I'll divide equally all the money we get."

The sailor and Fritz each extended Jack a hand.

"I'll go," said Tim.

"Und me, too," added Fritz.

"Then it's a compact," said Jack.

And thus the tie of friendship between them was sealed.

CHAPTER III.

THE SEA SPIDER.

On the following day Jack and his two companions began to work upon the submarine boat, and as all the parts were in the shop ready to be put together, the work went fast.

Mr. Middleton had spread the news among the villagers that Jack was spending ten thousand dollars in the construction of the boat, and every one ridiculed the boy.

They looked upon him as being insane, for every one was as skeptical of the possibility of such a boat being able to navigate as they were doubtful of the existence of the vast treasure which they knew Jack expected to get.

The boy paid no attention to their sneers, but worked on for a month with his two friends, and the boat gradually grew in proportions until it at last assumed its proper shape.

Then the interior was finished and furnished in the most elaborate manner with carpets, furniture, utensils of every description, arms of all kinds, and many singular electric attachments of Jack's own invention that were designed for use under water.

At last everything was completed, and the boat was ready for launching, with the name of the Sea Spider in gilt letters upon her bow.

It was a singular looking craft, shaped like a cylinder, pointed at both ends, its plates being made of thin but strong metal with riveted joint bands, and everything was galvanized.

It was one hundred feet long by fourteen in diameter.

There was a knife-like ram at the bow, and a row of barred lights at the runs, a trap door opening in the bottom on each side, and above them rows of windows protected by steel wire netting; in back of these two side propellers, two more astern, and a long, thin rudder, all protected by netting.

The deck was surrounded by a low railing, and a trap in the top gave ingress to the boat; astern there was a projection of the deck with port holes in it, and forward there were three circular windows, the middle one projecting ahead of the others, being used as a pilot house.

They were cross-barred, and furnished with sliding shutters.

Over the pilot house was fastened a powerful searchlight, capable of radiating a glow a mile ahead, while the dead lights were capable of diffusing light all around the boat.

Inside the boat was divided into two floors, and each floor partitioned into five compartments, the bow and stern, lower and upper ones being filled with compressed air, controlled by force pumps.

The second upper room was the pilot house, the room in back a general cabin for dining, cooking and sleeping, and the room in back of it a storeroom for diving armor, weapons, utensils and food.

The second room in the hold was for electric batteries with a dynamo in it to generate electricity, the next room was a large empty compartment designed to be filled with water to sink the boat, and aft of it was the engine room for working the propellers.

On the day the boat was finished Jack demolished the model, and received an applied patent upon the invention from Washington by mail.

He had progressed famously with Fritz and Tim, for the three grew to like each other more and more.

The old sailor developed his true character after a while, and proved to be a tremendous liar, his fertile imagination creating some of the wildest yarns ever spun by a seaman.

Fritz, on the other hand, was a sober, solemn fellow, with a great love for music, of a quick temper, and always combative.

He and the sailor got along well, but they were constantly chafing each other, and planning all kinds of tricks to play upon one another.

Jack was in the village post-office when he got his patent papers, and was eagerly reading them over, when Mr. Middleton stopped him.

"Ah, Wright," said he, "I heard that you finished your model."

"Yes," said the boy, "and I am almost ready to go down under the sea to secure the papers you want from the wreck of the Happy Fun."

"Do you mean to say you intend to run the risk in such a vessel if you have constructed it?" incredulously asked the man.

"Not exactly. On Monday morning I will launch my boat and have it drawn the river into the bay. You can inform the whole village of my plan, that they can witness the exhibition. I want to assure that my boat will work."

Mr. Middleton's face became wreathed in a sarcastic smile, and he shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"We shall all be on hand to see you make a fool of yourself by deliberately committing suicide, Jack Wright."

Jack nodded.

"Very well," was all he said, and he walked away.

Mr. Middleton kept his word, for long before the fall of night every man, woman and child in Wrightstown knew that the boy was going to test his boat.

A delegation of the best citizens, headed by the minister, called upon the boy that night to make an effort to dissuade him from what they considered certain death.

Jack received them politely, but firmly refused to heed any of their arguments, and they sorrowfully took their departure, predicting a violent death for him.

The next day was Sunday.

Jack and his two friends rested.

On the following day they began to knock out the end of the workshop, for there was no other means of getting the Sea Spider into the water, and when this was done she slid from the ways and floated in the creek like a cork.

Jack and his friends boarded her, examined her all through, and finding that she was as tight as a bottle, the boy entered the pretty pilot house.

In front of the wheel there was a compass and other instruments for determining speed, depth, grade, etc., and a small, square switchboard with levers upon it, by means of which all the electrical apparatus was controlled.

He turned one of the levers, setting the dynamo in motion and when a stock of electricity was generated, he stopped it.

Then he grasped the wheel, and said:

"Fritz, go down below and see if the machinery acts right."

"Yah," replied the boy, and he opened a trap in the floor, and disappeared down in the battery room."

"Tim, keep a lookout."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the old sailor, touching his forelock. Jack then turned a lever, and set the machinery in motion. It was perfectly noiseless.

The Sea Spider's propellers began to revolve, and she ran ahead, half submerged, on the surface of the creek.

Jack tried the tiller, and found that she answered it in half her length; then he increased her speed until she ran at the rate of twenty miles an hour; then he stopped her, and she came to a sudden pause as if she had hit a rock.

"She is perfect thus far," remarked the boy delightedly.

"Aye, aye, lad, but ther principal trial has yet to come."

"You mean going under water?"

"To be sure."

"Oh, have no fear. She will stand the test."

"I hopes as she will, 'cause thar'll be a big crowd to see her."

"The jeers of the crowd would be much worse than the loss of the nine thousand dollars I spent in building her," said Jack.

"As much as that, lad?"

"Yes. I have only got one thousand dollars left."

He then shouted down a speaking tube:

"How does the machinery work, Fritz?"

"Dot vha all righd," came the Dutch boy's cheerful reply.

He was such an expert that Jack knew he could depend upon him in every particular, so he was satisfied.

The whole morning was spent at trying the boat in every way upon the surface, and when they brought it back to the shop and anchored it Jack was delighted.

"If she behave as well under water as she did upon the surface," he remarked, as they went to dinner, "I will be thoroughly satisfied, and shall soon start off on my trip in each of the sunken treasure."

"Und I think me dot I go mit you on dot drlp," said Fritz.

"An' me, too," added Tim.

"Nothing would please me better," was Jack's answer.

It must be admitted, however, that when the time came for them to start for the bay, they all felt somewhat nervous, courageous as the trio were in the face of most any danger, for the result of the trial would be either an awful failure or a grand triumph for them before the skeptical villagers.

There was no shirking it, however, so they boarded the Sea Spider promptly at three o'clock, and started her.

Down the creek she glided swiftly between the verdant banks, and as she shot out into the bay a thrill passed over Jack, when he saw that the whole village had turned out to witness the performance of the boat.

The shore was black with people, the pier was filled with them, and hundreds of rowboats were gliding over the water filled with strangers who had come from a distance to witness the descent of the strange boat.

A tremendous shout greeted the appearance of the Sea Spider, and Jack proudly sent her spinning about the bay to show off her speed, and the other evolutions she was capable of performing.

As the boat glided up to the dock, upon the end of which stood Mr. Middleton surrounded by a party of city friends whom he had invited up to witness the performance, Jack left the wheel in Tim's hands, opened a door in the pilot house, and stepping out on deck he was greeted with a cheer.

"Mr. Middleton," said he, "are you satisfied thus far that my boat is a wonder in her movements upon the surface?"

"She certainly is extraordinary in her speed and the promptness with which she acts," replied the gentleman, "but as yet you have not shown us what she can do under water."

"I shall do so in a few minutes. She will act the same way under water as she did on the surface."

Mr. Middleton held up a check.

"I've got an order here for one thousand dollars made out in your name on my bank," said he, "if you go down to the wreck of the Happy Fan and bring me the tin box that stands in a locker in the captain's cabin astern."

"You shall have the box."

As Jack said this he returned to the pilot house, and closing the door after him, he sent the boat over to the spot where Mr. Middleton's vessel was sunk.

There he brought it to a pause.

As the ship owner had said, this spot was the deepest and most dangerous in the bay.

As soon as the Sea Spider stopped, Jack called his two friends together, and got three diving costumes from the storeroom, gave them instructions how to act, and they then put on the rubber suits.

Over these they donned galvanized suits of mail to resist the water pressure, the numerous joints giving them perfect freedom of motion.

There were knapsack-shaped reservoirs attached to the backs of the helmets of copper holding thirty-two cubic feet of air, enough to last a man an hour or more, and as soon as they were attached with thumb-screws, weights were adjusted to keep the divers from ascending to the water's surface.

There was also a small, powerful electric lamp attached to the tops of the helmets, with a battery wire attached to a machine fastened on top of the air reservoirs, and belts around their waists, in which were thrust electric knives and revolvers.

As everything was then in readiness, Jack turned one of the levers which put the air pumps in motion.

They compressed the air from the lower reservoirs fore and aft into the reservoirs above them, which left the first, third and fifth lower rooms empty of everything.

Tubes were opened by pulling around another lever on the

switchboard, and the sea water rushed into the empty chambers, the amount graded exactly as Jack desired by the lever.

Instantly the bow of the boat sank and dragged the rest of it under.

Within a moment the Sea Spider vanished from the sight of the spectators, and a sudden gloom filled the interior of the boat with a pale green color; but Jack dispelled it by turning a current of electricity on the myriad of arc-lamps on the walls and ceilings.

At the same time he started the searchlight.

A tremendous glare of light shot from the reflector, pierced the water a long distance ahead, and lit it up as if by day.

Water began to leak in at several unguarded and overlooked crevices, and a strangely oppressive feeling took possession of the divers such as they never felt before.

Despite the fact that automatic injectors kept the rooms supplied with air from the reservoirs, and valves discharged in bubbles in the water the vitiated air, it seemed for a moment as if the three adventurers would perish.

All the blood in their veins seemed to suddenly rush up to their heads and burst from their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths; their lungs acted spasmodically, and their senses became bewildered, their vision dim, and their hearing difficult.

In his eagerness, Jack had descended too rapidly.

He should have gone down gradually to accustom them to the change of pressure, and, seeing his error, he diminished the influx of water, and they then became more accustomed to the situation.

The glass visors of their helmets were not closed yet, as they had no use for the diving suits until they were at the bottom and ready to leave the Sea Spider by one of the traps in the bottom.

Fritz was terrified, and old Tim looked scared.

It was impossible to see how Jack felt, as his face was as immobile as a Chinaman's, never betraying his emotions.

"Shdop!" yelled the Dutch boy in tones of terror. "I vant to go ub by de dop! Shdop a leedle! Och, du lieber Gott! Ve vhas all det men! Led me got ub, I dolt you!"

"Keel haul me, lad," gasped Tim, "I ain't a-skeered o' facin' ther wust man afloat, but this are too strong fer my blood."

"Don't alarm yourselves," coolly replied Jack. "You will soon get used to it. I am going down deeper still."

"No, no!" roared Fritz, with chattering teeth. "Yust looker dem fishes! Shiminetty, dot poat vill pust, und plow us all to der tuyfel. Vat you tink—I'm a mermaid, vonct?"

Jack made no reply, but kept his glance fixed upon the indicators, as he gradually continued the descent, and saw by the quivering of one of the needles that they were entering a terrific current that was straining and wrenching the boat.

The Sea Spider shook and trembled, striving to turn to the right, then wrenched around to the left, but it kept steadily descending until an indicator announced a depth of four atmospheres, or one hundred feet.

No bottom was reached yet, but the boat went down further, and Jack glanced at the electric atomizer.

It was a spraying machine to neutralize the carbonic acid thrown off in breathing the confined air, a mixture of quicklime and potash mixed with water, being constantly sprayed in the air to purify it and assist respiration.

The deeper they went the darker the water became, but the glare of the electric light revealed a strange sight.

Thousands of familiar and strange-looking fishes were attracted toward the boat by the lights, and waving weeds and long floating aquatic plants of strange shape floated about them.

Creatures of horrible appearance, that never rose to the surface, strove to dart at the inmates of the boat, but were stopped by the thick glass windows; under-water forests of singular trees, with constantly waving arms, were broken

thrust in the descent while the phosphorescent gleam and flash of dark objects lent a starry glimmer to the water strange to behold.

Life under the sea was a strange sight to mankind. An ecstatic thrill passed over Jack.

The dream of his lifetime was realized at last.

"Poor father!" he muttered. "He would have given all he owned to have witnessed this sight. But God's will be done, he's dead, and it was reserved for me to carry out his wishes!"

Off to the right an immense dark object began to appear like some grim demon reaching up its ragged arms to grasp them, and the boy saw that the shell of the boat was going straight toward the main body of it directly below them.

"The Devil's Jaws rocks!" he muttered, as he grasped a lever and turned the glare of the searchlight upon the mass.

He had just time to start the propellers and send the boat ahead, when the boat grazed the edge of the mass. It was this rock that wrecked the Happy Fan.

The boat scratched and grated, bumped a projection, and gave its inmates such a shock that Fritz and Tim fell down.

The boat kept going at an angle, and Jack kept his eyes wide open, to detect any errors he had made in the construction that might need repair.

Suddenly he observed a ship's mast on the left hand side, and a moment later the hull appeared.

By this he knew that he was nearing the bottom, and he therefore brought the boat to a pause, and let it sink straight.

They scarcely felt it land on the sandy bottom, and no longer felt the fierce force of the tide, for they had left it above them.

But no sooner had it touched the bottom, when down came a dislodged rock from the heap they grazed and struck the roof of the dining chamber with such a crash that a hole was stove in.

Jack had just noticed that the name on the wreck was that of the Happy Fan when the accident occurred.

The three were hurled to the floor by the awful shock, and when they arose they saw torrents of water pouring into the boat, filling it up.

There was no time to screw the visors of their helmets shut, and Jack shouted to his terrified companions:

"The boat is filling! There's no salvation except to reach the surface of the water, 175 feet above. Look out! Off with weights!"

They were caged in the boat like rats in a trap.

Jack made an effort to start the pumps, to empty the air rooms of the water and raise the boat, but a wall of water struck him ere he could do so, and sent him and his companions spinning.

He succeeded in gaining his feet a moment later.

They were up to their necks in water then, and it still continued to pour in so fast that within a few minutes the entire interior of the Sea Spider was filled up.

CHAPTER IV.

ON BOARD OF THE HAPPY FAN.

How Jack and his companions ever reached the surface of the water they never knew, for they were unconscious when they did ascend in the midst of the rowboats dotted the bay. Then all the spectators saw the occupant of some of the boats pushing them up and a great cry arose on all sides.

"We expected nothing else," said some, and others shouted, "How they did it!" "What the courage!"

"Where is the boat?"

Jack and his friends were revived with extreme difficulty, and were taken ashore more dead than alive.

They were half drowned, squeezed frightfully from the pressure of water they had been in, and their suits were torn.

Yet they lived, and that was saying a great deal.

The villagers brought them home, and a useless search was made for the boat, after which the crowd dispersed.

Fully a week elapsed before our friends were themselves again.

Jack felt crushed and humbled over their defeat before the large crowd who had witnessed the accident.

He was a persevering and determined boy, however, for after he had thought the matter over, he went out to the shop, and there found Tim and Fritz playing cards.

"I am going to recover the boat," he said to them.

"Can't be did," said Tim, shaking his head doubtfully.

"Well, I can try at any rate. I can't stand the humiliation of going through the village and having every one sneering and laughing at me, calling me a fool and a maniac, and all the time jibing me about the boat."

"Oh, it vhas awful!" grunted Fritz.

"I'll go to some wrecking company in New York and spend my last dollar there to have the boat raised. She has got several defects which I saw that must be remedied."

Fritz and Tim tried to persuade him, but he remained firm in his resolve, and said he would do it.

"Aye, now," exclaimed Tim, "yer knew verry well as how they couldn't git up ther Happy Fan, so how is they a goin' ter raise ther Sea Spider, lad, es she's in ther same depth o' water?"

"My boat isn't so heavy as the ship, nor is she encumbered by sea weed and aquatic plant like Mr. Middleton's boat. Besides, she's got several chambers full of air yet, and if they can grapnel her she would easily come to the top."

"D'ye 'low fer ther high pressure an' tide on her?"

"Of course. There's a weight of seven atmospheres pressing her down, but her natural buoyancy ought to overcome that."

"Atmospheres?" queried Tim, in puzzled tones.

"Every 32 feet down is an atmosphere," replied Jack, in explanatory tones, "and each human being on the surface has a pressure of fifteen pounds to the square inch pressing all over his body."

"Den ve hat a puddy goot loat to carry down dere, eh?" and Fritz.

"Rather," dryly said Jack. "When my father and I calculated the resistance of the boat, we knew that every human being who exposes six thousand inches of space to pressure would, at 32 feet below, have to hold up 90,000 pounds. We went down 175 feet. At that depth we each underwent a pressure of about 495,000 pounds."

"Holy Shiminey!" gasped Fritz, his eyes opening wide.

"You can imagine, therefore," said Jack, with a smile, "that if a human being holds up so much on his small body what must the boat sustain with its one hundred feet of length and fourteen feet diameter. If the metal and braces were not so strong the water would crush the boat like an eggshell."

Jack left Wrightstown on an early train, and was gone all day, and when he came back he told his friend that he had engaged a coast wrecker to raise the Sea Spider and tow it up in the creek.

On the following day a tug came into the harbor with two flatboats, and having anchored over the spot where the Sea Spider went down, they began to grapnel for her.

Two days were thus spent, when finally one of the iron freight in the aperture that was broken through the roof, and the submarine boat was pulled to the surface.

There she was, suspended between two flatboats, and the tug pulled them over to the creek, up in which the Sea Spider was beached at high tide.

Jack then paid the wreckers, and they went away.

As soon as the tide ran out the submarine boat was left stranded high and dry, and Jack boarded her.

There was an ugly, jagged opening in the deck, and he opened a trap, and passed down into the pilot house by means of a flight of stairs into a depth of six feet of water.

He dove down, and reaching the door in the glass turret of the pilot house, he opened it, and the water ran out of the boat.

He then descended into the hold, and having emptied it he made an examination of the boat all over.

Beyond the hole in the roof she had sustained no damage, for the drenching her inside got did not injure anything.

The tide came up again, and Jack floated his boat up to the workshop, for a crowd of the curious villagers had gathered around intent upon examining the boat, and were passing various remarks of an unpleasant character.

Among them stood Mr. Middleton.

"Quite a serious accident," he remarked, eyeing the hole.

"If it hadn't been for that, we would have succeeded," said Jack.

"Nonsense."

"I'll prove it."

"How?"

"As soon as I repair the boat I'll go down again."

"You must be insane."

"I have confidence in my boat."

"When will you win my money?"

"In one week from to-day."

"Depend that there will be a bigger crowd than before to see it."

"I am satisfied," answered Jack.

"He is a plucky lad," remarked the ship owner as Jack and his boat vanished inside the workshop.

Having ascertained all the defects in the boat, seen what damage was done, Jack and his friends set about to repair it and rectify all errors.

Before the week was over, the Sea Spider was ready, and there was then not a thing the matter with her.

The last man to whom money was owed collected his bill.

"There goes the last of my thousand dollars," said the boy to his friends. "I have spent every cent I had in the world to finish the boat, and now I am penniless."

"Why don't you sell your house and ground?" asked Tim.

"Never. Humble as it is now, there will come a time, on my return from the bottom of the sea, when I will be a millionaire. Then I intend to come back here, and beautify this place so that you would scarcely know it."

"You vhas keep on inventin'?" asked Fritz.

"Forever. It is my forte to invent, and I am going to follow it up in the future. Now, boys, get aboard the boat and we will try her again in the creek. If she operates all right there she will go the same way in the bay."

They boarded the boat, and sent her out into the sunlight and sank her under the creek at its deepest point.

An hour's practice with the boat sufficed to show Jack that his boat was now all right, and he returned her to the workshop until the following Monday.

Mr. Middleton kept his word, for when the boat again started off to go under the bay the shore swarmed with people from far and near who came to see the sight.

Jack and his friends were nervous, for their experience was yet fresh in their minds, but they were brave fellows, and without flinching or faltering they located the place where the Happy Fan was and went down.

It seemed an age to them ere they reached the bottom

again alongside the sunken ship, but no accident befell them, and the Sea Spider came to a pause.

They had on their diving costumes, and now prepared to leave the boat by going through a trap into a small shaft in the big central water chamber, and having closed the door behind them, they opened the other.

The water filled the shaft at once, and they strode out into the hold in their diving costumes and found the water very cool.

The electric lanterns on their helmets cast a ruddy glow around, and opening the trap in the bottom of the hull they stepped out onto the sea bottom.

Their metal suits were so arranged that they did not feel the increased pressure, and mechanical arrangements fastened on the sides of the helmets over their ears, which Jack called his andiphones, enabled them to hear each other speak nearly as plainly as if the water did not separate them.

The wreck of the Happy Fan lay heeled over close by, and the three divers made their way toward it together.

Jack was the first to reach it, and swinging himself up on deck, he made his way aft and entered the swinging cabin door and vanished from sight.

Tim and Fritz followed, but a moment later they heard Jack scream in loud tones:

"Help! Help! Oh, it's killing me—it's killing me!"

CHAPTER V.

UNDER THE SEA.

The cries Jack uttered brought Tim and Fritz running into the cabin of the Happy Fan, and as the powerful jets of light in the lamps on their helmets streamed out and lit up the surrounding water, they beheld a tragic scene.

Jack stood in the middle of the cabin with the tin box he had come after clutched under one arm, and in his hand he held an electric dagger, with which he was beating off a school of huge conger-eels.

These reptiles were from ten to fifteen feet in length, with thick, powerful bodies, and sharp, gleaning eyes.

One of the creatures had wound itself around Jack's body, and its sinuous coils were drawn as tight as a boa constrictor's, as it slowly began to crush the life out of the boy.

It was hard to strike a violent blow with anything under water, and the knife Jack operated worked with a spring, by which the long, keen blade shot out of the handle on pressing one of the screws with equal force to that of a blow.

Each time the boy darted out the blade, and it pierced an eel, the creature was sure to perish.

Upon seeing the boy's danger, Fritz and Tim glided over to his side, and attacking the eel which had wrapped its coils around him, they killed the creature.

A serious conflict then began between the divers and the rest of the huge eels, but as the voracious creatures are of a cannibalistic turn of mind, they began to devour their dead companions, and therefore ceased the battle themselves.

This being the case, the divers retreated.

"Did the lubber hurt you, Jack?" queried the old sailor.

"He nearly broke my ribs with his squeezing," replied the boy.

"Ooh! I toughd it vhas de sea serpend," said Fritz.

They returned to the boat with the precious box, entered the trap in the side and closed it after them.

Going into the shaft, Jack pulled a lever, and the water was pumped out of the place, and they ascended the stairs to the deck above, and entered the pilot house.

Having abandoned their diving suits, Jack pulled one of

the heavy armor on the which, and the machinery pumped the sailors in water out of the Sea Spider.

She disappeared down to the surface gradually, and within two hours after she had gone she reappeared on the top of the water.

As soon as the crowd saw her a cheer went up from every throat, hats and handkerchiefs were waved by the spectators, and a sense of the most intense excitement prevailed.

Jack saw Mr. Middleton upon the densely packed pier, and directing the Sea Spider over to it again he soon brought it to a pause close to the spiles.

Taking the rescued box in his hands, the boy went out on deck with it, and held it up.

"Mr. Middleton," said he quietly. "Here is your box. I have won."

Every one was amazed, and none more so than the ship master, who never expected to see the box.

In fact, Jack had turned the former sneers and ridicule with which he had always been met into cheers and acclamation.

The enthusiasm ran to fever heat when the news flew from mouth to mouth that the boy had secured the tin box.

Every one was excitedly yelling and talking.

Mr. Middleton took the now rusted box and broke it open. Inside lay the papers he wanted, perfectly intact.

His face changed color, for he now had undeniable evidence that Jack's invention was a perfect success, and a great wonder.

Withdrawing the check for one thousand dollars from his pocket, he handed it to Jack, and said:

"Jack Wright, you are the victor!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" yelled the crowd.

A proud smile illuminated Jack's face as he took the check and bowed his acknowledgments to the enthusiastic crowd.

"I knew I would win!" said he.

Mr. Middleton got upon a stack of freight, and addressing the multitude in loud tones so all could hear, he said:

"My friends I beg to say a few words to you in behalf of gallant Jack Wright, the most wonderful young inventor of the present century. Hitherto we have all been skeptical of the success of his father's invention, and dubbed him a madman. We have sneered at and ridiculed the son, and we have all acted in a mean, ungenerous spirit, for we all firmly believed that he was trying to gull us with an utter impossibility. Now, however, he has shamed us. He has proven that he was right in his theory and that we were a pack of ~~concentrate~~ ~~amaze~~. He has fairly and squarely, at the risk of his life, proved that navigation under water is not only possible but possible. For my own part, my friends, I publicly apologize to the boy, and know that in the generosity of our nature we cannot help forgiving all who have humbled, reviled and reviled him. Do you all not join me in trying to make amends for our past folly?"

A unanimous yell of approval pealed from every mouth. Jack was satisfied.

He turned again and again, and then holding up his hand in a final farewell, he shouted:

"I will see you all of you. I sincerely bid the past be forgotten, and I hope you will all bring a lesson from what

has happened. I have vindicated myself with you all, and now I am going away in my boat in search of the lost treasure under the sea, to gain which this boat was built. When I come back I shall prove the second theory of my poor dead father to be correct, and teach you never to condemn until doubt can no longer exist."

Jack left them cheering, and returning to the interior of the boat, he sent her back to the workshop.

"Middleton's cheek saves me," cried the boy, with a smile, "for now I can store the boat with provisions for a long journey, and by the end of the week I am going to cross the Atlantic and hunt for the treasures of the Alpha and Omega."

"Yah," said Fritz solemnly. "Me und Dim vhas dalkin' over dot metter, und ve vhas go mit you alretty."

"Tain't no use argyfyin' ther matter no longer," added Tim, taking a chew of navy plug. "We're satisfied now es this 'ere craft is jest as safe down in Davy Jones' locker as she are up on ther surface, an' we pins our faith on her. 'Sides that, how in blazes are you a-goin' ter navigate her alone? Can't be did nohow. Leastways not as long's we kin help ye, lad. Yer a good scholar wi' a scientific head, chock full ter ther hatches wi' courage an' ambition, but yer ain't no navigator, an' I am. Then wot good would either one on us be if Fritz wuzn't here ter cook us a good squar' meal, lad, eh?"

And so it was settled.

The trio then busied themselves for several days at getting everything in readiness, and when the day of departure came, and the Sea Spider glided out on the bay, they were met by an unexpected ovation from all the villagers on the shore.

A brass band played a triumphal march, flags and banners waved in the breeze with hundreds of handkerchiefs, guns boomed and fireworks were let off amid thunders of cries and applause from the Wrightstown people.

There was a small brass gun aboard of the boat, and a salute was fired from it, while the flag on the pole set in sockets forward was dipped several times, and then the Sea Spider opened up the headland and speeding out in blue water started on her wonderful trip.

Jack stood at the wheel in the pilot house, and as the boat sped away from the land he turned to his companions, and with an exultant look in his dark eyes, he said:

"At last we are embarked on our cruise, and I can safely promise you that it will be replete with strange adventure, and end in a most satisfactory manner."

"An' when it's over, what d'ye intend ter do w' ther boat?" the old sailor asked, as he glanced over a chart.

"I hav not yet decided on that point, but I was thinking that it would find a ready sale to any government as a torpedo boat."

"Shermany, for Inkstance?" suggested Fritz blandly.

"Avast, there!" angrily retorted Tim. "America, you mean yer lubber!"

"Got ond! Vot you dink alretty, you don'd vant no nafy."

"No, not ter lick your lubberly country."

"Doller und blitzen! You vhos in oolded mine country vond?" demanded Fritz, bristling up with patriotic anger.

and shaking his fat fingers under Tim's long nose. "Ve vhas de greatest soldiers by der vorld."

The subject was changed to the working of the boat, and they were deeply engrossed in the subject, when Jack suddenly pointed ahead, and remarked:

"There's a sail, Tim."

"Bearin' down on us, too," replied the sailor.

"What do you make her out to be?"

"A English cruiser."

"Isn't that queer—in these waters?"

"Why, no. She's perfectin' ther Canady fishin' banks. Thar's been a heap o' trouble atween our Government an' them Britishers fer some time past about that 'ere matter, an' they're now a-watchin' each other's interest sharp."

They keenly watched the stately frigate bearing down upon them under full sail, and soon verified the old sailor's statement, for they saw the British flag at her masthead.

It soon became evident that the Britisher also saw the Sea Spider, although it only laid seven feet above water when floating upon the surface.

The frigate laid off to the eastward, and the Sea Spider was going toward the southeast at the rate of ten knots an hour, and when they came within half a mile of each other a gun was discharged from the man-o'-war.

"Blast 'em, they orders us to haul to!" said Tim.

"What for?" queried the boy.

"Can't yer understand? They imagine this is a torpedo."

"Then they may try to make trouble for us, Tim."

"If we lets 'em."

"I shall not obey them."

"They'll fire at us if ye don't."

"Let them fire and be hanged. I'll sink her if they do."

He kept the Sea Spider going on her course, and the frigate turned a trifle and kept heading toward her.

The Britisher was now evidently bent upon running the submarine boat down, and the crew was doubtless offended at the cold indifference with which their order to lay to met.

This was demonstrated shortly afterwards.

They fired a shot over the Sea Spider.

As it went humming across the bow of the boat a chill passed over Jack, for he had seen that if the shot was aimed a few feet lower it would have pierced his boat.

"This is becoming rather hot," he remarked drily.

"Ye'd better sink her, Jack," said the old sailor, anxiously.

The boy turned the lever to do so, but the pump failed to obey its order to compress the air into the reservoirs.

Consequently the Sea Spider did not sink.

"The two sternmost propellers are working," exclaimed Jack in puzzled tones, "so I don't see why the air compressor don't work, as they are controlled by the same batteries."

"Has anything gone wrong, lad?"

"I fear so."

"Then stop ther boat—quick!"

"The frigate will overhail us if I do."

"Aye, but you can't do anything else."

"Yes, I can. I'll run away first," said Jack.

And putting on full speed, the Sea Spider dashed ahead at double the velocity at which she had hitherto been going.

Another shot came howling from one of the frigate's guns, and as it was aimed to strike the Sea Spider, it went whistling within a few inches of it, but missed its mark.

It went plunging into the sea with a loud hiss.

Away went the boat at fully twenty knots an hour, its long cone glistening like polished silver in the golden glow of the setting sun, and the gunboat gave pursuit.

Suspicious of the peculiar-looking craft, the captain of the frigate was determined to find out what it was or blow it out of the water as speedily as possible.

Jack did not become the least bit excited.

He ordered Tim to go down in the battery and engine rooms to find out what the trouble was; then, foreseeing that to continue the race would endanger the boat, he brought it to a pause.

The frigate crept up nearer to it, and Fritz came rushing into the pilot house with an excited look, and gasped:

"Vot's der medder vonct?"

Jack pointed out one of the windows.

"Look and see for yourself," he remarked.

"Oh! A gunboat shoodin' at us alretty!" he remarked.

"Hallo, Tim," shouted Jack down the speaking tube. "Any news?"

"Aye, sir," came the reply. "A belt slipped off ther gearin'."

"Put it back again."

The sailor did so, and came up the companionway again, but by this time the man-of-war had ranged up to within twenty fathoms of the boat, and went up into the wind's eye with flapping canvas and shaking hull, her ports bristling with guns and her decks swarming with marines.

A boat dropped from its side, manned by an officer and four sailors, who pulled for the Sea Spider.

"Is everything all right now?" asked Jack, as Tim appeared.

"Aye, aye, sir," said the old fellow, with a salute.

"Then I'll have some fun with these autocrats!" said Jack, with a laugh, as he watched the boat's crew drawing nearer.

He kept his hand upon a lever, and fastened a keen watch upon the approaching sailors until their boat touched the side of the Sea Spider.

The officer and two of his men stepped on the forward cylinder of the boat, and pausing there, he shouted:

"Boat ahoy!"

Jack did not vouchsafe any reply.

"Boat ahoy!" repeated the officer angrily in louder tones.

Still no reply was given, no sign of animation was seen, and the Sea Spider lay like a log, lapped by the waves.

The officer and his men climbed up the cylinder with some difficulty toward the pilot house windows, evidently bent upon looking or getting inside of the boat.

Dark as the interior of the boat was, they could see the three figures standing within the pilot house.

Jack and his friends remained as quiet as mice.

But the moment the officer reached the tiny deck in front of the windows Jack turned the lever he had hold of

In quest of the water, and down plunged the boat, leaving the officer and his two amazed men struggling upon the surface as the boat went from under them.

Down went the Sea Spider to the depth of ten feet below the surface ere Jack brought it to a pause.

Then he turned on the electric lights, and shot a glow upon the struggling figures of the three men whom he had given such an unexpected ducking, and he saw their friends in the boat take them aboard.

The three divers burst into a roar of laughter, and the boat drifted with the tide until it bumped against the hull of the frigate and came to a pause.

"We are safe enough from them now," said Jack, smilingly.

"I guess dot dey don'd petteer fool mit us some more," said Fritz.

"That ere sousin' must a-took some o' ther starch out o' their necks," chuckled Tim, as he steered the boat away from the frigate.

"It will be safer for us to proceed under water until we throw that fellow off our track," said Jack, "so I will sink her down an atmosphere, and we will have supper."

He accordingly did so, and the Sea Spider glided on through the sea, out of the influence of the waves and out of sight of the wonder-struck sailors on the man-of-war.

Fritz then served a toothsome mess, and a watch was divided, Jack taking first trick at the wheel, while the other two turned in.

All alone stood the boy at the wheel down in the still depths of the sea, driving his singular craft along at a rapid pace across the vast Atlantic, surrounded by strange fishes and other living denizens of the deep.

He steered by the compass for the isle on the African coast, and the Sea Spider acted admirably.

Several hours thus passed by, and the boy was about to arouse Tim to relieve him, when suddenly there came a wrench at the boat that nearly hurled him down.

The Sea Spider began to gyrate, and then spun around faster and faster, and presently began to shoot ahead at a rate of speed far greater than that at which her propellers were capable of driving her at their best.

Jack was startled, and glancing out of the window, he saw that the boat was in the grasp of some mighty current that was dragging it along and downward with resistless force.

CHAPTER VI.

A SHIP IN DISTRESS.

"Fritz! Tim! Awake! Help me! I can't manage the boat." It was Jack's wild shout that awakened the two sleepers, and they bounded from their berths in the cabin, and ran into the pilot house, where they found the boy inventor struggling with might and main to turn the Sea Spider out of the weird current into which she had so unexpectedly plunged.

The queer set of the windows of the pilot house showed his eyes with what swelling eyes the boat was rushing on

and downward, for fishes, sea weed and other objects were passed like lightning.

Jack could not turn the rudder with the wheel.

"Tim! Come here!" he gasped.

"Aye, aye! Wot current is this as we're in now?" asked the sailor.

"Heaven only knows! Hold the wheel with me."

The old sailor obeyed, and Fritz gasped:

"Vot can I do dot I help you, Shack?"

"Pull that lever—No. 3. We must compress the air into one of the chambers and fill and sink below the current or we are lost."

There was no other hope of escaping the awful current, so the Dutch boy did as he was told, and the boat rapidly sank.

Down, down, down it went, yet the grasp of the strange current did not seem to relax.

They were going in a direction different from that in which they desired to go, and noticed that an unusual heat in the water was making the air stifling in the boat.

Then the truth dawned upon Jack.

"We must be in the Gulf Stream!" he gasped.

The strange, warm current of which he spoke that swept up from the Mexican gulf adds about three miles an hour to the speed of vessels on the surface of the sea, but down below at the depth the Sea Spider was sunk to, it ran ten times stronger.

Within a few minutes the Sea Spider was down to a depth of two hundred feet, yet the fierce intensity of the current increased instead of diminishing.

The three then held a consultation, and it was decided to raise the boat to the surface.

"If she keeps going down at this rate," said Jack, "she may strike a rock and go to pieces."

There was no way of knowing what might be in the elevations and depressions of the sea bottom below, beyond the limit of the searchlight, yet Tim said:

"Tain't likely as we'll hit no rocks."

"Why you dink you dot?" queried Fritz.

"Because this 'ere current allers a-runnin' would wear away any rocks an' sich like wot might a-been in ther bed o' ther stream."

"That's a sensible view. We'll raise her, anyway, though," said Jack, and turning a lever he set the machinery to work pumping the water out of the boat, and she began to rise.

Presently she reached the surface.

There her onward flight was materially checked, and as no further danger was apprehended, Jack and Fritz soon after turned in, and Tim went on duty.

The following day dawned gloomily.

The navigators partook of a good breakfast, and then repaired to the pilot house, where they caught a good look at the sea, and saw that a storm was brewing.

The water and sky both had turned very dark, and the wind had risen with a moaning and mournful dirge, as it went sweeping across the ocean.

Low over the leaping waves flitted sea birds, with piercing cries, and off to the windward there loomed up a dark wall of fog.

It came rolling toward the half-submerged Sea Spider propelled by a gale of wind, heaping up the sea in a white curling wall of foam before it.

"A white squall!" exclaimed Jack.

"Aye, lad, an' thar's a ship athwart its course," said Tim, pointing at a full-rigged brig to the southward that was rolling and pitching on the choppy waves with all sails set and the crew trying to furl and reef.

"She petter got oudt of the vay vonet," said Fritz, "or dot vall of vite clouds vill smack her by der chaw."

It was evident that the ship was making every effort to weather the storm, but it was equally as evident that she was doomed to meet it ere she was ready.

On came the wall of mist with a humming sound, and presently it reached the brig, which had turned its stern to the storm, intending to scud before it.

Unfortunately some of her topsails were left standing when the gale struck her astern, and she plunged her bowsprit under and tripped herself, for a succeeding gust came immediately after the first one.

It held her half submerged, and then the wall of foamy water struck her and made a breach clear over her decks.

Within an instant the ship was buried out of sight, and hidden behind the wall of mist.

After a brief interval the mist parted, and the crew of the Sea Spider caught a glimpse of the storm-beaten vessel.

Her main-topmast was blown away, the foremost studding-sails were torn to ribbons, and were streaming out ahead, and her mizzen mast had broken off close to the deck and went by the board.

"She's a wreck!" Tim exclaimed excitedly.

"Yes," replied Jack, pityingly, "and before that gale is done playing with her she'll be dismantled."

"Och! Mine Gott, vot a bity!" groaned Fritz. "Vy ve can't go by dot ship, und helb dose fellers alretty?"

"It won't do to remain on the surface to meet that storm," said Jack, "so we will sink a fathom or two and run toward her under water to render what help we can."

Accordingly the Sea Spider was sunk, and Jack steered straight toward the raging storm.

A peculiar sensation was then experienced.

No sooner had the boat passed under the squall when a terrific motion of the boat followed, caused by the upheaval and breaking of the tremendous waves above them.

The winds forced the sea up in heaps and ploughed furrows in it more or less deep, but this movement of the waves did not extend to any considerable depth.

"Every wave," exclaimed Jack, noticing his friends' nervous uneasiness, "propagates its motion to a depth of three hundred and fifty times its own height. That's why we feel the motion here. If the waves above are thirty feet high their motion is felt ten thousand feet below. But at a comparatively slight depth the motion is very feeble, and they can't affect us at all a little lower down."

"It must be werry rough above, then," said Tim.

"Vot makes me feel yust like a cork gittin' shooken ub in a pottale vonet?" said Fritz.

"You look sea sick," laughed Jack.

"I dink so, somedimes," dolefully answered Fritz.

"Shall we ascend now, Tim?"

"I reckon we're mighty near thier brig."

"Then up we go. Stand by, now."

He sent the Sea Spider to the surface.

A swift glance around showed them the ship plunging in the stormy seas a few fathoms away, half heeled over, her crew clinging to every available thing for dear life, and the waves making breaches over her every minute.

Here the wind was raging and shrieking like a legion of fiends, the seas were tumbling and tossing with pent-up fury, and the lowering clouds were so black that a dark, gloomy pall overhung everything.

In one glance Jack took in the situation, and said:

"There is only one way to save the crew of that ship."

"Wot's ther plan?" queried Tim.

"If she lays rolling there so helplessly, getting knocked about by the wind and waves," replied the boy, "she is sure to go to pieces, and the crew will founder with her, if, indeed, they ain't first washed overboard."

"But vot ve can do?" demanded Fritz anxiously.

"Throw them a tow-line, and let the Sea Spider drag her along with the storm until it spends its strength."

"Aye, aye, but who'll venture out ter toss 'em a line?"

"To go out on the deck of the Sea Spider exposes a fellow to the risk of getting washed overboard," said Jack, "but I'll venture to do it if you'll manage the boat."

"Aye, aye, that I will readily. Yer see, if I wuz ter do it my ole wooden leg an' glass eye'd make me fail."

"Yes, you could scarcely do it," said Jack, as he steered the boat as near to the wreck as he could with safety.

He then put the wheel in Tim's hands, instructed him how to act, and securing a long, thin, but tremendously strong, wire cable, he went up a staircase to a trap in the deck.

Pushing it open, a mass of sea water poured in on him, but he made his way through it, and went out on deck in the midst of the blinding storm on his errand of charity.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ACCIDENT OCCURS.

"Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy!"

Clinging to the handrail on the deck of the Sea Spider, Jack faced the gale in a mass of flying spray and shouted with all his might to the ship's crew.

His voice pealed out shrilly upon the roaring wind, and was drowned by the bellowing of the raging billows so that the men on the ship failed to hear it.

"Ship ahoy!" he screamed again at the top of his voice.

Clear and distinct the cry now pealed above the din of the elements, and was wafted to the ears of the crew, some of whom glanced over at the Sea Spider.

They were justly astonished.

At first they imagined it was an enormous denizen of the deep, but as soon as they observed Jack standing there on

they realized that it must be a strange vessel of some kind without masts.

"Ship ahoy!" came the reply.

Jack heard it at once, although the next instant a bellowing wave broke over the Sea Spider and engulfed him in a gurgling mass of brine.

As soon as he recovered, he shouted:

"Stand by to catch a line!"

"Aye, aye!"

"We will aid you!"

"Thank God!"

Under the skillful management of the old sailor, the Sea Spider ran up to within a dozen yards of the wreck, and Jack prepared to fling the hawser.

Both vessels were plunging and rolling—first down in the trough, then riding upon the crest of the waves.

It was a very hazardous thing to do, when Tim brought both vessels together in such a rough sea, for a collision would have sent them both to the bottom; yet no such accident occurred.

Jack swung the coils of the wire rope around and around his head, and then let them fly with a loud hiss.

Uncoiling as the bights shot over the intervening sea, the line reached the deck of the other vessel, and one of the unfortunate seamen caught it.

Within a minute it was made fast to a stanchion, and Jack secured the end to a ringbolt on the after part of the deck.

Then he dove down below and closed the trap door safely.

Jack hastened into the pilot house, and there he found Tim skillfully driving the boat along with the storm.

The hawser became stiff and taut, and as the Sea Spider dashed away, the ship was towed after it rapidly with the rushing storm, the spray dashing up over them in clouds, the waves rolling along astern in bulging masses, and they both rode easier.

The violence of the wind seemed to abate, now that they were going with it, and the dashing billows no longer upreared their heads or breached over them.

They passed along with great swiftness, riding over the surging, tempest-tossed seas with ease, and covered mile after mile amid the liveliest flashes of lightning and the most violent thunder claps.

"Hurroar!" yelled Tim delightedly, as he cut a caper with his wooden leg and winked his good eye. "By ther big binacle o' Neptune, we've overcome the storm!"

Jack entered one of the side turrets, by means of which he was enabled to see what was going on in back of the Sea Spider, and looked at the wreck.

She was towing on a level keel.

All the crew was on deck, clearing away the wreckage and getting down the torn sails from the standing masts as fast as they could in order to make their craft more manageable.

"All hands are safe now," remarked Jack in satisfied tones.

"Aye, aye," cheerily replied Tim, as he twisted the wheel, "we have 'em you see, they are to be given for you!"

An hour passed by, and the storm began to diminish

"How is she going now, Tim?" queried the boy.

"Fifteen knots, accordin' to ther indicator-log as you've invented an' put up on ther wall there."

"Slacken speed to ten knots."

"Aye, aye."

"Fritz!" said Jack to the Dutch boy in the other window.

"Yah!" replied the young Dutchman.

"Avast thar!" interposed Tim, looking displeased.

"Vot's der medder?"

"Say, 'aye, aye,' like a sailor."

"Yah."

"Belay, ye lubber."

"Yah."

"Hush!" interposed Jack. "Fritz, keep a lookout astern."

"Yah."

"Blast yer timbers, didn't I tell yer ter—"

"Watch the ship," interrupted Jack.

"Vell—vot else?"

"See if she overhauls us any."

An interval of silence ensued, then Fritz said:

"Look out, she vhas a-comin' quicker as ve vent."

"The wind has got her in its grasp."

"Now de tow line vhas shlackin mit itselluf."

Just then there sounded a terrific uproar astern, and the machinery moved laboriously.

"What's the matter?" demanded Jack in affright.

"De tow line vhas got caught mit de brobeller."

"Tangled in the propeller?"

"Yah."

"Tim, stop the boat!"

"Aye, aye, sir," said the old sailor, complying.

The wheels stopped revolving, and Jack grasped a hatchet and rushed up on deck as fast as he could.

A dismaying sight met his view.

As soon as the Sea Spider went slower the towing line sagged, and had spun around on the axis and blades of the propellers, rendering the boat unfit to travel.

Here was a dilemma.

Both vessels began to roll, pitch and toss again.

Unless the line was cut between the propeller and the ship in tow there was bound to be a collision between the two boats that must certainly have fatal results.

It was a dangerous thing to cut the line, for to do so it was necessary to go out to the extreme end of the Sea Spider under water in order to get at it.

The crew of the brig saw what the trouble was.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted the captain.

"Ahoy there!" responded Jack.

"Isn't the hawser caught?"

"Yes. It is binding our propellers."

"Shall I cast off this end?"

"Yes—by all means."

The man did so, and Jack re-entered the Sea Spider.

"Well?" queried Tim.

"We can't get that wire off unless we sink to the bottom," said the boy, "and we can't go ahead until it is off."

"Aye, now, but wot's ther soundin' hereabouts?"

"That's a mystery to me."

"How deep kin a reg'lar diver go under water?"

"Seldom more, and rarely as deep as 175 feet."

"Aye, but we must be in five thousand feet depth here."

"This boat ean stand it, and I believe our suits can also permit us to enter that depth for a few minutes."

"Shall I sink her?"

"Yes, unless you know of any other means of getting rid of the wire."

"Only by a-goin' out on the end in a divin' suit."

"We can't do it in this storm, Tim."

"Then le's get out of it by a-sinkin', an' fust try ter remedy ther trouble by attackin' it from up here."

"You feel timid about going to such a depth?"

"Aye, aye, sir," frankly admitted Tim.

"Very well. Sink her a few fathoms to get out of the storm."

The ship was able to take care of itself now, so they left her and sank.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNDER WATER BATTLE.

Well knowing that the brig could now take care of itself, as there were spars and sails and men enough left on board to navigate her to port, the crew of the Sea Spider remained buried three fathoms under the sea till the storm was past.

Jack then entered the storeroom, and donning a diving suit without any weights, he went down in the water chamber, it filled with water without filling the entire compartment, so the boat could not sink.

His air knapsack was so buoyant that it floated him, and might have lifted him to the surface had he not clung to the hull of the submarine boat, as he crept out to the propeller net.

After a few moments he successfully reached it.

A glance showed Jack that the netting which surrounded the propellers had become unfastened, which gave the blades an opportunity to wind the cable around the axis.

Fortunately Jack had brought just the right kind of tools with him to release the cable and refasten the net, and as he had plenty of light from the reflector upon his helmet, and was a rapid workman, he soon finished his task.

Fritz and Tim each stood in one of the forward side windows of the pilot house, watching him, and reflecting the search light upon him while he was working.

Myriads of fishes were swimming about the boy and the boat as it hung there in midsea with an awful depth yawning below them, probably attracted by the lights.

Schools of mackerel, large tunny fish, globe fish and anglers mingled with sea-cats, torpedoes and pipe fish, while among them leisurely floated beautiful hydroza, aurelias and medusa.

The latter were exquisite creatures of the jelly-fish tribe, yet it is the belief of scientific men that experienced swimmers often owe their sudden drowning to the attack of these handsome, inoffensive-looking creatures.

The floating medusa, for example, resembled a mushroom,

the stalk of which separated into lobes, twisted, shriveled and fringed, the edges of the cup delicately cut and provided with long, thread-like appendages which descended vertically in the water, like drooping branches of a willow.

The gelatinous substance of their bodies was in some as clear as crystal, and in others opaline, bright blue, and pale and rose color, their soap-bubble bodies affording food for whales.

When Jack had finished his task he stood on the conical deck of the motionless Sea Spider watching the contraction and expansion of their bodies by which they swam, when suddenly a huge, dark body came shooting out of the vast waste beyond.

He cast one glance at the fish and shuddered.

"A swordfish," he muttered.

Jack had cause for alarm, for the creature, twenty feet in length, carried a sharp, bony spear eight feet long at its snout.

The boy knew that these pirates of the ocean attack with the most intense fury all large-moving objects, animated only by a pure love of destruction, for they swim at the fearful velocity of a mile a minute, and it is this charging which gives its lance such a terrible force.

A case is known where a fish drove its sword into the metal sheathing of a ship, and through the timbers; to drive a pointed iron bolt so far would require a score of blows with a thirty-pound hammer.

The fish paused a short distance from the boat, and after a curious survey, it swam around it.

Jack followed it keenly with his glance.

"If that devil of the deep makes up his mind to attack the Sea Spider," he muttered in dismay, "he will drive his sword into her, and perhaps sink her to the bottom."

"Not knowing exactly what to do, Jack accidentally shot the glare of his electric light into the creature's eyes, dazzling it.

The swordfish gave one plunge and vanished.

A sigh of relief burst from Jack's lips.

"Thank heaven, it's gone!" he muttered.

He was just about to walk up the cone to the deck of the boat, to signify to Tim that everything was all right, when, like a flash of light, the swordfish suddenly reappeared.

Jack gave a nervous start.

He again flashed his light in its eyes.

Instead of driving it away, he aroused its anger, and it made a dash for the bull's-eye fastened on top of his helmet with such fearful rapidity that Jack scarcely had time to duck when the monster shot over his head and vanished in the gloom beyond.

Jack knew very well it would return.

Nor was he mistaken, for it soon came back.

Then, however, he was prepared for it.

Detaching an electric wire from his belt, he thrust the brass plug in the end of it into a screw hole in one of his pistols.

He kept a wary glance fixed upon the swordfish, and as it was just upon the point of darting at him again, he aimed his weapon and pulled the trigger.

There was no report from it—only a tiny electric spark, but a small projectile was shot from the weapon, and, true to the aim, it lodged in the body of the fish.

For an instant nothing occurred save a sudden convulsion of the creature from the pain of its wound.

Then the fish exploded within its body.

A slight report was faintly heard, and a moment later the swordfish was literally blown to fragments.

Jack's newly invented electric revolver was a success, and a thrill of joy passed over him to see how well it operated.

All the other fish were scared away, and only a few bubbles arose to the surface of the sea to tell that any unusual disturbance had taken place down in the dense solitude under the water.

The boy returned to the interior of the boat, and having divested himself of his diving suit, he said:

"The wheels are clear now; return to the surface, Tim."

The sailor started the boat to the surface, and asked:

"Wuzn't that 'ere swordfish a-tryin' ter foul ye, lad?"

He wanted to kill me."

"Aye, now, I told ye, Fritz, ye onmannerly lubber!"

"Well, he vhas plowed all to pieces, don't id?"

"Them 'ere electrical pistols are wonders."

Just then the boat reached the surface, and they saw that all traces of the storm were now gone.

The sea was tranquil, the sun shone down like a ball of burnished fire, and a fresh, fragrant breeze was sweeping over the sea.

Not a sign of the brig was to be seen.

"As she is out of sight," said Jack, "I have no doubt but that she has got under sail and went on."

"Keel haul me, then, but she must a-been all right," said Tim.

"Do' poat vhas retty to go?" queried Fritz.

"Yes. It's your trick at the wheel, isn't it?"

"Yeah."

"Then start off."

The Sea Spider continued her course, and a week passed eventfully by, during which they met with fair weather, and traveled at twenty knots all the time.

During this time Jack intently studied the old Spanish manuscript, and compared it with several maps which he and his father had frequently pored over in days gone by.

The maps were outlines of the west African coast, and were marked with every isle from the Azores down to the Cape of Good Hope. One in particular had been especially marked. It was the one, a league to the westward of which the ancient Spanish treasure galleons were supposed to have gone down with their precious cargoes of gold.

"As the Aipha and Omega were linked together when they were, it was likely that they would lie side by side now," said Jack to his friend. "But, then, if they were worked by men they would not shift along over the bed of the sea, until they were carried into a depression on the surface of the ocean in which they might have lodged, below the influence of currents."

"Just about as we won't find 'em very easy," said Tim.

"According to sounding about the vicinity in which they are supposed to lie," said Jack, "they cannot lie in water any deeper than three hundred feet. You must also remember that the sands and mud on the sea bottom shift all the time. They may lay bare, or they may be buried and hidden in sand. Then, again, they may have rotted and fallen to pieces; but of one thing I am sure, we will find them."

"I hope me dot," said Fritz soberly.

"Many attempts have been made at different times by various people to secure the treasure," said Jack, "but so far beyond the depth of divers do they lie, that up to the present no one has succeeded in getting them."

Just then a steamer hove in sight.

Fritz sighted it, and Jack procured a good binocular, and took a survey of it, when a startled exclamation burst from his lips.

"Why, wot's ther matter wi' ye, lad?" gasped Tim.

"Do you see that steamer?" muttered Jack.

"Aye, that I do."

"It's a pirate!"

"Hey?"

"Look at the flag she flies—the body is black, with a white skull and cross bones."

"Aye, now—so she is."

"And there's a man-of-war in pursuit of her!"

CHAPTER IX.

FIGHTING A PIRATE.

Jack sunk the Sea Spider until only the low turrets of her pilot house remained above the waves, and they watched the chase with the utmost interest.

The frigate worked with steam, as well as with sails, and as she rapidly overhauled the flying pirate there came a puff of smoke, a belch of fire and a report from her deck.

A shot went screaming over the water from one of her guns after the piratical steamer, and raked her forward deck.

It was a stern command for her to haul to, but the buccaneer failed to obey it; on the contrary, the bold commander of the vessel came about, and as the steamer luffed up a broadside was poured in at the man-of-war.

The heavy discharge of the ordnance rolled like muttering thunder over the waves, and several of the heavy-calibre shots struck the man-of-war, cutting through its standing rigging and shivering some of the deck works.

Undaunted by the damage and loss of life, the frigate ran up the proud banner of the United States to her truck and returned the disastrous fire.

There was not much chance for the pirate to run, now that they were at close quarters, so both vessels broached to, and turning a second broadside upon each other they fired again.

It was a terrific discharge, and echoed over the sea with awful intonations, a vast cloud of smoke arising and enveloping both ships, hiding them from view.

When the smoke finally lifted it revealed the frigate lying crippled with a huge hole stove in her hull and two of her masts shot away.

"The pirate has dismantled the frigate," said Jack, "and now the rascal is preparing to take to flight."

"Gol durn 'em, an' one o' Uncle Sam's ships, too!" said Tim wildly, for all his sympathies were with our navy.

"Vell, id vhas pedder dot vay, as a Sherman ship," said Fritz.

"Belay thar, ye lubber!" roared Tim, thoroughly aroused at this. "Don't yer dar' say a word about our navy, confound yer. I remember when I wuz aboard o' ther Wabash, we once had a run in wi' a Dutch frigate, an' blowed it clean up in the air out o' ther water wi' one o' our forty pound Armstrong guns."

"Shessnuds!" said Fritz derisively.

"Don't quarrel," interposed Jack. "I hate to see our country's flag humiliated by such a rascal as that pirate, and I think I have the means in my power of turning the tide of battle in the marine's favor."

"How are that?" eagerly demanded Tim. "Show me how I can serve ther old flag, an' ye kin shiver my timber leg if I won't sacrifice my life ter do it."

Jack opened a small case on the wall and took out a vial, from which he emptied a floury white powder into his hand.

"Do you see this compound?" he asked.

Tim and Fritz nodded affirmatively.

"Do you know what it is?" proceeded Jack.

"No," was the sailor's reply.

"Well, I'll tell you. It's a high explosive when mixed with a certain chemical. In its present condition it is so harmless you could do anything with it. It makes no noise in exploding, yet its power is greater than that of gunpowder, dynamite, or guncotton. One ounce of this stuff exploded under that pirate would blow the ship to fragments!"

Tim and Fritz were amazed.

"Den vy yer don't do it?" demanded the Dutch boy.

"Aye, aye! Blow ther lubbers aloft into ther sky."

"I shall do so under one condition."

"An' wot may that be, sir?"

"If we fail to drag the pirate over to the frigate."

"Dot blan vhas pedder still," said Fritz. "Ve got dem glose by each odder, und den dey all vill haf a fight mid each odder und plow dem ships mid pieces!"

Jack took a projectile from the case on the wall.

It looked like an elongated cartridge; and going to the after bulge in the deck he paused beside an object that resembled a very small gatling gun.

It was, in fact, a weapon designed to discharge one hundred shots a minute, and carried a magazine of one thousand shots.

The gun worked by a hydraulic pressure of gas, the explosion of which expelled the projectiles with force enough to carry ten miles, if necessary.

Moreover, the projection of shots was accomplished by the gun without shock or heat, so that if any high explosives such as dynamite were used, the bombs would not explode until they struck the object aimed at.

The boy unfastened the feed of the magazine, inserted the deadly shell and locked the gun breech again.

He then protruded the muzzle of the piece through a water-tight disk of rubber with a slit in it in one of the window frames.

Having done this he went into the storeroom, and donning a diving suit he left the visor open and withdrew from one of the lockers a small, chain cable, with a peculiar, cup-like object on the end, and went into the pilot house with it.

"Tim," said he to the old sailor, "I am going up on deck, and you can then lower a boat about one fathom beneath the surface and run after the pirate. Put on a speed of twenty knots so that we will soon overhaul him."

The old sailor assented, and Jack went up on deck.

Laying himself down flat, and hanging on to the railing, the boy fastened one end of the cable he held to the ring-bolt astern, and then the boat sunk.

Submerged, it darted rapidly ahead, and soon came up to the pirate vessel which was now going as fast as her propeller could drive her, to escape.

Tim managed the Sea Spider so well that she ran beneath the steamer, and kept pace with her.

As soon as this was done Jack arose to his feet and attached the cup-like sucker at the end of the cable to the bow of the steamer at the bilge, and then re-entered the Sea Spider, where he divested himself of his armor.

"Now, Tim, start her back for the frigate," he said.

"Aye, aye, sir," said the sailor, and he did so.

The moment the Sea Spider veered around, she pulled the bow of the pirate after her.

Amazed at the peculiar actions of the boat, the crew tried by every means to keep her going away from the man-of-war without being able to do so.

Despite the rudder being turned properly, she was dragged helplessly along, back to the man-of-war.

The crew of the latter, imagining that she had come back to give them battle, at once began action, and poured broadside after broadside into her.

Unable to turn around to do the same or get a shot back at the frigate, the pirate had to use but one gun standing up forward, and was nearly blown out of the water.

The cable which linked the sea rover to the submarine boat parted from the shot of a broadside, and the pirate was free to act as she pleased.

She began to return the man-of-war's fire, and as her guns were the heaviest, bid fair to blow the frigate to pieces, as it could scarcely manœuvre, when the Sea Spider arose.

She came up between the two boats.

The moment the two crews saw her, there was a cessation of hostilities, for they imagined it was a torpedo boat.

No one on the Sea Spider was visible.

For an instant she lay on the water's surface like a log, moving with the swell of the sea.

Then Jack shouted to the men on the man-of-war through an audiphone set in one of the windows:

"Is that a pirate?"

"Aye," came the reply. "Crew mutinied, seized the steamer,

had turned it into a freebooter, committing many crimes on the sea."

"Shall we destroy her?"

"By all means, if you can."

"Are you and your craft safe?"

"We can repair all damage and navigate."

"Then watch the pirate."

As Jack spoke he turned the Sea Spider around, presenting the stern ports to the buccaneer.

The boy went aft and sighted the gun, for the cartridge he put in it was ready to be fired.

He turned a lever, putting the gun in operation.

Only one shot was discharged, and yet no explosion accompanied it, but the missile screamed as it was projected.

It struck the hull of the pirate, penetrated, and then there followed an awful roar that shook the sea.

The huge vessel was blown into atoms with all on board, and the voracious sea swallowed its remains.

The stars and stripes went fluttering up to the top of the flag pole, and the next moment the Sea Spider dove under the water.

CHAPTER X.

THE PEARL DIVERS.

A few days later the Sea Spider was among the Azores, the depth of ocean from the Lesser Antilles to that point through which the boat passed, measuring from 17,000 to 13,300 feet.

Down along the African coast from the Azores, the sea coast, is not very deep excepting along the Madeira and Canary Islands.

"The sea's surface is hottest at the equator and coldest at the poles," Jack told his friends, as the boat was turned to the southward. "Sea water is so dense it isn't easily penetrated by the sun's rays, and I've got records to show that while it is hot under icebergs, it is cool below in latitude 43 degrees."

"Under the equator?" asked Tim, in surprise.

"Yes. At 6,000 feet below the thermometer marks 41 degrees, while on the surface it indicates 80."

"Den ve vhas goin' by a puddy hot place to work," said Fritz. "Id vhas pedder dot ve shtay down by der bottom of de sea, as to go by der top if ve vant to be comfor'ble."

From the Western Islands the Sea Spider made a bee line for the coast of Morocco, and came in sight of land below the Rock of Gibraltar near Tangier.

They did not press in too close to the shore, for the water was dotted with numerous fishing boats of all kinds.

The farther southward they proceeded the more boats they encountered, but as they wished to shun observation, Jack decided to travel by day under water, and at night on the surface.

"We have got to get down to the Gold Coast of Guinea or we will arrive nowhere near our destination," the boy told his friends. "For the island described in the old maps, where the Spaniards have been hunting slaves for the Spanish Government. In

order to have all details defined my father wrote to the officials of that country, and they gave him a correct description of the exact location of the fiery Island in the shape of a cloven hoof."

Fritz sunk the boat.

Below the sea's surface at this location the scene was very strange to mortal eyes.

Everywhere the submarine soil in its shape bears a resemblance to the subaerial surface, for there were valleys, plains, hills, ravines, encampments, deserts of sand, great mud deposits, rolled stones, picturesque rocks, water springs and volcanoes.

There was scant light a short distance down, various sea plants floated their long, brilliantly colored ribbons in the most graceful curves and modulations, or displayed their elegant tracery in fine, clear-cut relief, like trees on land.

Animals moved slowly, springs of fresh water were dispersed in vapor, and fish of every known species disported themselves about, the largest eating the small fry, and vice versa.

Water-logged wood lay on the bottom like the barnacle-covered rocks, covered with slime and overgrown with sea weed, hiding great sea crabs and reptiles, the bright glaring eyes of which viciously shone out at the inmates of the submarine boat.

Occasionally a wreck was met with, half buried in the sand or mud, some yet in a fair state of preservation and others all fallen to pieces, their rotten timbers resting on ground littered with rusted ironwork, broken anchors, and remains from the cargoes and interior furnishings of their quarters.

It has been calculated of the fish tribe among herring alone that if they could multiply during twenty years without losing their spawn or fry, the offspring would form a mass ten times greater than the globe.

It is estimated that there are 8,000 species of fishes, 4,500 shell fishes, and 2,500 coral and star fishes within the 25,000,000 square miles comprising the Atlantic Ocean, so you may form an idea of the wonders revealed to our hardy adventurers throughout their trip.

On the second day, as they were coasting in shallow water they suddenly came upon a curious sight.

Directly athwart the course of the boat there suddenly shot the dark figure of a naked negro, with a rope around him.

He carried weights to sink his body, and he landed in the midst of half a dozen more men who were searching the bottom in quest of sponges and pearl oysters.

Jack brought the boat to a pause.

"Look there!" he exclaimed, pointing at the men.

"Divers!" exclaimed Tim.

"Naked men, py shiinlnetty!" said Fritz in amazement.

"They're natives of Morocco diving for sponges."

"Aye, now, an' good ones they is, too."

As yet the men had not seen the boat.

They ran a great risk of drowning, being devoured by sharks and suffocation, in consequence of having to hold their breath for a protracted time.

The most robust young men are chosen for this trade, but they seldom continue in it more than five or six years.

Their fibres eventually stiffen, the pupils of their eyes become red, and they frequently die of consumption.

These divers deposit the oyster containing the pearls in boats 28 feet long, of which three or four hundred make up a fleet.

Each boat has eight stones which serve as anchors, while the crew numbers five to eight men, all of whom dive in turn.

The men had nets suspended around their necks, into which they put the oysters, their hands being gloved to preserve them from wounds they might get in detaching the shells from the rocks, and they descended by the help of a cord to which a fifty-pound weight is attached.

Placing their feet in a kind of stirrup, with the left hand they held the cord and with the right closed their nostrils to prevent the exit of air, of which they took a deep breath previous to their descent to the bottom.

Having gone down, they signaled to those in the boat to raise the stone, after which they began to speedily fill their nets with shells, which being done they signaled to have the nets raised after which they arose themselves to get breath.

"I'm going to surprise them," said Jack.

"How you make yourselluf dot?" queried Fritz.

"I will drop the boat to the bottom, we will don our suits and go out and join the divers," explained Jack.

They all fell in with this proposition at once, and hastened to put it into practice.

The Sea Spider was rested upon the sea bottom, and having put on their diving armor, the three went into the water room and passed out of the hull upon a sandy bottom.

"Keep together," said Jack. "They don't see us yet."

"Aye, now, but we ain't got our figger head lights lit."

"Then light up now."

They turned on their pocket batteries, and three piercing shafts of dazzling light shot from their helmets.

Hastening toward the divers, the men saw them.

For an instant they stood fairly paralyzed; they then recovered, and wondering what strange sort of beings these were who could walk and talk under the sea, one after another they shot up toward the surface, vanishing like magic.

Only two of the boldest remained.

They, too, might have beat a retreat, but just as they were about to do so an enormous monster appeared.

"Look out!" shouted Jack. "It's a giant cuttle fish!"

The horrible creature was hovering over the two men, and fastened its tentacles upon them.

The hideous object resembled a sack with serpent-like arms surrounding a horrible mouth, with which it seizes its prey and sucks them as a spider does a fly in order to enjoy at his ease the juicy flesh of its struggling victim.

At the ends of its tentacles it had cup-like suckers, which once fastened on a victim never relaxed till it was cut off, and wherever they touch the skin is seared, burned and puckered, filling its victim with the most excruciating agony.

The two unfortunate divers it had caught struggled desperately to get away and save their lives, but the creature clung to them, its disengaged tentacles waving about like willow tree branches in a gale of wind.

"Good heaven!" pityingly exclaimed Jack. "It will kill them."

"Go for dot son-of-a-gun!" roared Fritz, excitedly.

"Hold on, boys—I'll manage it alone!" said Jack.

He hastened toward the cuttle fish without a weapon in his hand, and Tim and Fritz followed, for they did not have much confidence in the boy's ability to cope alone with the horrible creature.

The moment Jack reached it he fearlessly ran up to its gaping mouth, and heedless of the rest of its tentacles fastening upon him, he thrust his arm inside of the glutinous monster.

A warning yell burst from his two friends.

They feared that the creature would kill the boy.

Jack knew what he was doing, however, for with one pull he turned the cuttlefish inside out like a glove, and, contrary to every one's expectation, the creature did not survive the strange operation, but released its victims.

They at once ascended to the surface, half drowned.

The cuttlefish lay squirming on the ground, and Jack burst into a fit of laughter, and exclaimed:

"That shows the advantage of study. If every diver read of the creatures that so often threaten his life under the sea he could dispose of any cuttlefish that might attack him, and thus save his life."

CHAPTER XI.

A COLLISION.

The adventurers returned on board of the Sea Spider a few minutes afterward, and feeling assured that the Morocco pearl divers were frightened away from that spot, they divested themselves of their suits.

It was then two bells (one o'clock), and Fritz put a savory luncheon upon the table in the cabin, to which they all did ample justice; then Jack entered the pilot house, and turning a lever he started the boat.

"Those divers no doubt imagined we were a peculiar race of people who inhabit the sea," laughed Jack, "and were wonder stricken upon beholding us."

"Lor' bless you, lad," said Tim, taking a chew of navy plug, "if yer hadn't set sail fer that 'ere devil fish an' fouled its chawin' tackle wi' yer starboard flipper, ther critter'd made a Mathew Walker out o' them sure pop."

Just then a most horrible sound emanated from the cabin, and Tim gave a start, scowled like a fiend, and picked up an axe.

It was Fritz grinding out "Sweet Violets" upon an accordion.

"Thunder an' lightnin', d'ye hear that?" gasped the old sailor, fairly turning white in the face with rage, for whenever Fritz wanted to anger him he wailed that tune upon his instrument.

"He is only doing it to get you mad," laughed Jack.

"By the horned spoon, he won't do it no more, then, for I'm

“Smash that ring-tailed old music box ter drift round!”

And with blood in his eye Tim stumped over to the door, and, flinging it open with a bang he yelled:

“Slow yerself in a seam in ther deck, blast yer old sour-hided! I’m a-goin’ ter foul yer riggin, by thunder!”

But Fritz would not stow worth a cent.

He simply uttered a hoarse chuckle, and seated upon the table he turned his tune into a rattling sailor’s hornpipe, for he was an expert player on the instrument he handled.

Tim paused, and dropped the axe.

A change came over his rugged, weather-beaten face, for the scowl vanished, and a good-natured grin was substituted.

“Gosh!” he gasped, as he began to beat time with his wooden leg. “I thought as yer wuz a-playin’ somethin’ else, lad.”

“Nix for Shosef,” answered Fritz. “Vy yer don’t tance vonet?”

“By güm, that ‘ere music seems ter be felt even in my wooden leg, an’ shiver me I ain’t got ter hop! Hooray! Clar ther track, Fritz, fer ther double-decked ole cyclone from Snug Harbor. Yer kin swab my sister’s cat’s tail if I ain’t a-goin’ ter throw a step or two.”

And with a yell of delight away hopped Tim with his good leg and wooden leg waltzing the floor in a hornpipe he used to dance in his youth, but which now looked like the prancing of a cow on a hot stove.

The accordion wheezed, rattled and groaned away, and Fritz roared out different figures until the old sailor was almost ready to sink with exhaustion, as he made his legs fly.

But just then there came a sudden interruption, in the form of a cry of alarm in the other room from Jack.

“Hey! Tim, come in here!” he shouted.

Instantly the dancing and music stopped, and with looks of alarm depicted upon their faces, the two ran into the pilot house, where Jack stood navigating the boat.

“Wot’s ther matter, lad?” demanded the old sailor, breathlessly.

“Just look out in the water there,” replied the boy.

A most curious phenomena was going on.

Every fish that came near the boat suddenly gave a convulsive start, turned over, and began lashing the water, as if maddened.

Tim gaped out of the window in astonishment, and laying his hands against the metal frame, he was about to pass a comment, when a yell pealed from his lips.

The next instant he fell to the floor as if stricken by a blow.

“Och du lieber!” roared Fritz. “Vot’s der medder—huh?”

He grabbed a steel upright, and was about to bend over his friend, when he, too, uttered a howl, his legs shot up in the air, and turning a double somersault he landed on his back, yelling for help at the top of his voice.

Jack was amazed.

He gaped at the two curiously, and then around at the water.

For the first time he noticed a crackling and snapping noise, and saw that incandescent little blue sparks were snapping all over the metallic work of the Sea Spider.

Then the truth suddenly dawned upon his mind.

“The whole boat is electrified!” he muttered.

The terrible significance of this remark may be appreciated when it is understood that he was entombed within a veritable volcano, for no matter what part of the boat with which he came in contact that was a conductor of electricity he was sure to get an awful shock.

It became manifest at once that there was a leak of the fluid somewhere that kept charging the boat, and he hastily fastened the wheel and made his way to the battery room.

A hasty examination failed to reveal the cause of the trouble, and he then made his way into the engine room, where the dynamo was working at full power.

There he saw the cause of the mischief.

One of the thick copper wires had become detached from a binding post, and laid against the metal floor, discharging the electric fluid into the boat, which in turn communicated it to the surrounding water, killing the fishes.

He instantly stopped the dynamo, and putting on a rubber glove to insulate his hand he returned the wire to its place.

Having remedied the mischief, he returned to the pilot house, and there found Tim and Fritz struggling on the floor accusing each other of having perpetrated a practical joke.

The boy explained what caused the trouble, and they then arose and resumed their duties.

On the following day a most singular accident occurred.

The boat was under water, and they were coasting within a few miles of the harbor of Cape Blanco, off the Great Sahara Desert, when Fritz, who was on duty, yelled:

“Shack! Shack! Rocks ahead!”

The boy rushed into the pilot house just as the Dutch boy turned the lever to let the water out of the forward rooms, and let the air in, in order to raise the boat.

There was no time to stop the boat from smashing into a heap of ugly, black rocks that arose ahead of them, so Fritz quick-wittedly resolved to drive the boat upward in an effort to skim over the tops of them.

The barrier ahead was so broad that it would have been a sheer impossibility to have even turned the boat around without striking, for they had run into a basin formed by the slimy stone, each arm of which arose on either side of them.

Moreover, there was full power on the machinery, and the boat had very swift headway.

“Keep her going, Fritz!” exclaimed the boy. “You can’t do any better.”

Like an arrow the Sea Spider curved up and shot toward the surface, the long, sharp ram on her cut-water cleaving the brine like a dagger, and she passed over the top of the rocks, her keel grazing them with a grating noise that made them shiver.

On she fled, swiftly, toward the surface, and just as she came within a few feet of the top the quick eyes of Jack descried a dark object floating in the water athwart their course.

“Look out!” he gasped. “It’s the hull of a ship!”

The Dutch boy spun the wheel around in an effort to avoid the barrier, but he was not quick enough.

There came a violent shock and a fearful crash.

The ram struck the bilge of the ship abaft of the midship section, and so great was the momentum of the Sea Spider that she drove her formidable weapon into the vessel up to the very bow.

A large hole was stove in the ship, and the Sea Spider came to a pause, unable to go ahead, and Jack cried:

"Reverse your lever and withdraw the ram!"

Fritz did so, and although the propellers furiously beat the water, she could not drag her ram out of the stout wooden planks of the ship, so firmly in was it thrust.

Linked together the two collided vessels drifted along and Jack saw that no planks were stove in the ship save the round opening into which the ram was punched.

Consequently the ship made no water and could not sink, for the Sea Spider buoyed herself up and did not drag the boat under any by its weight.

It was a serious predicament, for it rendered the Sea Spider helpless, although the ship could navigate, and having a full head of canvas up, it was heading for Cape Blanco, dragging Jack's boat with it.

How to extricate themselves the boy did not know, and they readily imagined what fright and consternation the crew of the ship must have undergone upon receiving such an awful shock, and seeing the steel ram projecting into the hold of their vessel from beneath.

The ship dragged them into port, ultimately, and came to anchor so that the crew might ascertain the cause of the peculiar accident that had occurred to them.

CHAPTER XII.

LOST UNDER THE SEA.

The impaled ship came to anchor within a land-locked harbor, and Jack went out on the deck of the Sea Spider in a diving suit.

The limpid water was so clear and transparent he could almost see the entire hull of the ship above him.

He went up to the boat and drew himself to the surface by its rudder, from whence he had a clear view of everything around him.

The boat was one of a fleet of turtle fishers of that region, which came from the island of Arquin, and the crew was composed of a mixed crowd of Arabians and native blacks, all of whom were on the deck of the vessel, excitedly discussing the accident.

The boat was shaped like a felucca, with an enormous lateen sail made of matting stretched upon huge bamboo poles.

People from other boats had come aboard, and they and the captain were peering down at the dim outlines of the Sea Spider faintly to be discerned below.

Jack could not understand what the men were saying, but he comprehended by their gestures that they were amazed at the boat, and imagined it was a monstrous fish.

On shore there was a small settlement of "swish" or mud

huts, thatched with rushes, and having the walls neatly white-washed, numbers of Fanti and Kroomen negroes, Arabs, Dutchmen and Portuguese living there.

Cape Blanco was the starting place for Timbuctoo in the Soudan, by the trail crossing the Oasis of Hoden in the Sahara, and also for Nun, in Morocco, by going along the coast of Sahel.

It was therefore an important station which accounted for its mixed population of traders and turtle fishermen.

Jack took in the scene at a glance, and might have gone down to the Sea Spider again had not an unforeseen event transpired to prevent him doing so.

One of the crew of the boat had seen him suddenly come up from the sea like some strange fish.

The man kept still about his discovery, and stole across the deck to the spot directly over Jack's head.

He held a rope in his hand, and making a slip noose in the end of it he dropped it down upon Jack's shoulders as dexterously as a Texan cowboy could have lassoed a steer.

Pulling the rope taut, the noose caught Jack around the neck of his helmet, and the man hauled him up by the head.

The boy was startled and alarmed upon finding himself thus made a captive, and ere he could do anything to save himself from capture the man landed him on the deck, gave a wild yell, and attracted every one's attention.

"See what a strange fish I have caught!" he cried, in Arabic.

Every one came crowding around, curiously, and stared at Jack's recumbent figure in amazement for a moment.

The boy thereupon arose to his feet.

This action startled the turtle fishers, for they never before had seen a human being clad in a diver's costume, and when the, to them, queer, metallic object assumed the appearance of a man, they became filled with superstitious dread, and falling upon their knees all around Jack, they bowed their heads to the deck.

"Is it a man of the sea?" cried one.

"Nay, nay—it's a devil!" averred another.

" 'Twas he who drove that spike into our vessel," said the third.

"And now he has come to kill us!" added still another.

The rest of the crowd groaned dismally.

Jack flung off the rope that captured him and smiled as he saw in what superstitious dread they held him.

"I say!" he shouted through the mouthpiece of his audiophone, "can any of you fellows speak English?"

None of the men understood him.

The sound of his voice startled them, and some had the boldness to glance up at his wet, glittering, metallic scales for an instant; but they shuddered at the singular talking monster, and covered their eyes with their hands again to shut out the terrifying sight.

Jack then addressed them in French, German and Spanish, all of which languages he spoke fluently, but even in this attempt he failed to get up a conversation.

It disgusted him.

He tapped the captain on the arm.

"Say, old chap, come with me," said he, beckoning to him.

He then made his way down below, and the moment he was upon the boat crew and hid themselves about the vessel.

Jack wanted to see how the prow of the Sea Spider was wedged into the hull, and his wish was now gratified.

He beheld the long sharp ram thrust through the planks at an angle, into the hold, and firmly wedged there.

The captain pointed at it and said something to Jack which he did not understand, and the boy drew a small bottle from his pocket.

He then observed some tools in a box, and picking up a hammer, some nails and a piece of board, he motioned to the captain.

As soon as the officer was looking at him he signalled by gesture that the captain was to nail the board over the aperture made by the ram.

It occupied some time to make the man understand what he meant, and then laying the things down Jack knelt beside the ram.

Uncorking the glass stopper from the bottle the boy carefully poured the liquid contents on the floor around the ram and then watched it.

The powerful acid ate a circle in the wood around the ram rapidly, rotting the planking through to the water.

As soon as this was done the ram began to retreat, as the weight of the boat pulled it out, and in an instant it vanished.

Water began to spurt up through the hole it left and fill the boat, but the captain, now realizing what Jack meant, seized the board, hammer and nails and began to cover the aperture.

Jack thereupon left the hold and returned to the deck, when the crew began to open fire upon him from all sides, with pistols.

A shower of bullets struck the armor worn by the boy, with metallic jingles; but they failed to penetrate, for the armor was made so strongly that it easily resisted the bullets.

There was one vulnerable spot, though; namely, the glass or in the helmet, and any one of the bullets might have hit, gone through, and killed him upon the spot.

The boy realized this.

Considering flight safer than fight, he fled.

Jumping upon the bulwarks, he was about to leap into the water, when a second volley reached him.

He paused, and glancing at the men he saw that they were all crowded in a bunch, now, up forward.

The boy had no weapon of any kind.

As an experiment, however, he turned on the electric current he carried, and flashed a powerful streak of light in the eyes of the opponents from the dazzling lantern upon his helmet.

It was broad daylight, yet the strong glare fairly blinded the men for a few moments, and taking advantage of their gloom, Jack dove overboard and disappeared beneath the water.

Down he went like a stone to the bottom, twenty feet below, and his alarm for any sign of the Sea Spider, for upon such imminent peril he took more rapidly away.

The boy was dismayed for after swimming all around he could find no trace of the submarine boat anywhere.

"What has become of them?" cogitated the boy. "It can't be possible that they have gone away and deserted me, can it?"

What to do he did not know, for within a short time the air that had been compressed in his haversack would all be consumed, and he must rise to the surface and open his visor, or die of strangulation.

Jack resumed the search.

Unfortunately, he wandered away and soon lost himself.

He had no compass to guide himself, and knew not in what direction to turn in order to get back to the shore.

He did not dare to abandon his weight yet, either, for if he once cast them off, he would rise, but could not sink again.

When the truth dawned upon him that he was lost, a chill of horror shot over him, for, heavily burdened as he was by his suit, he knew very well that he could not swim on the surface.

His electric lamp illuminated the ghastly scene and showed him that he was wandering through a patch of long, waving eel grass, that arose as high as his arm-pits, and impeded his movements, for the tough, sinuous vines wrapped themselves around him, tripped him, retarded his progress, and hid the scene ahead of him.

The lost boy began to flounder helplessly around, trying hard to extricate himself, when suddenly two enormous black bodies shot from the pale-green gloom, and came swimming toward him.

Jack glanced at them in horror.

"A pair of bottle-nosed sharks!" he gasped.

The small, evil, twinkling eyes of the man-eaters of the deep were fixed upon Jack with a malignant expression, and with a sinking heart he gave himself up for lost.

"Unarmed, how can I cope with them?" he groaned.

He sank tremblingly back in the seaweed and grass, and fastening a despairing glance upon the sharks he awaited their attack, almost assured that his doom was sealed.

It was not long in coming.

The pair of sharks both made a dash for him, side by side, and as they came within a few feet of Jack they rolled over, showing a pair of white, ghastly bellies, and their enormous mouths bristling with hideous teeth ready agape to snap him in two.

"This is the end of me!" groaned the boy with a shudder of horror.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIGHTING THE MAN-EATERS.

Jack let himself fall flat on the ground, and in so doing the electric wire attached to his lantern broke and came in contact with the metallic suit he wore, charging it with electricity.

As the two sharks shot by, their bodies grazed him and they both received an electric current that made them writhe.

With a loud snap their jaws came together, and they furiously lashed the water and passed on.

The man-eaters frequently came in contact with torpedoes, *raash* and *gymnotus*, electric fish that carry batteries as strong as the one Jack had, and probably imagined the boy was one of their ilk.

Only a short space of time passed when they came back, and as Jack was without a light he could not see them.

It seemed then as if he would perish, for the sharks plainly saw him, and they made another dash for him.

But just then an interruption came in the shape of a fearful glare of light that blinded them and caused the cannibals to swim around and around the boy, in circles.

"The Sea Spider's searchlight!" gasped Jack, as a thrill of delight passed over him. "They must see me."

"Jack! Jack!" came the voice of Tim.

"Help!" cried the boy, running toward the boat.

"Look out, dem sharks vhas after you!" yelled Fritz.

Jack glanced over his shoulder and saw the ravenous creatures in hot pursuit of him, and then he tripped over a rock and fell prostrate, the sharks swooping down upon him at full speed.

"Fire at them!" he shouted frantically.

Bang! bang! came two smothered explosions, and the balls tore through the water from the two slit rubber openings through which Tim and Fritz discharged their weapons.

Each one of the creatures was hit, but not mortally wounded.

Tim aimed the boat at one of them and drove the ram into its body, impaling it so it could not move, and Fritz, seeing that Jack was unarmed, thrust a large dagger out through one of the openings in the rubber, and cried:

"Take dot, und I vill come out by you alretty."

Jack grasped the knife as the boat came to a pause and moved the lantern wire from his clothing, as he, too, felt some of the electricity despite the fact that the armor was padded.

The remaining shark was a pugnacious creature, for no sooner was its mate impaled when it darted at the boat, turned over on its back and attempted to bite the steel hull.

In this endeavor it was unsuccessful, of course, and although it attacked the boat again and again, it failed to do any injury.

Then it turned its attention upon Jack and went for him.

The dauntless boy stood his ground, and having thrust the blade of the long dagger in its haft he presented it toward the oncoming shark, and kept his finger upon the spring.

He had the electric wire attached to his suit fastened to the end of the insulated rubber handle, and as the shark came up to the boy's extended hand he pressed the spring.

Out shot the blade and pierced the shark's head with an electric current that almost killed the monster.

It drew back, withdrawing the blade of its own accord, and plunged at it again with the same result, its blood dyeing the water so crimson that Jack could scarcely see the expiring thing.

A terrific gash was cut in its body.

Just then Fritz appeared in costume and came to Jack's

aid with a short-handled axe, with which he soon dispatched the shark and ended the life of the one that was impaled.

He also withdrew it from the ram.

A rushing noise all around Jack caused him to turn his glance from Fritz, and his blood fairly ran cold as he saw that the blood of the two monsters he had just killed had been scented by a dozen more sharks and attracted them to the spot.

This was too much for Jack, and he cried:

"Run! Run for your life, or we will be devoured!"

Away went the frightened young Dutchman, and they both dashed into the sea door of the submarine boat and closed it just as the sharks were coming in after them.

The water was pumped out of the closet when they got in it, and they ascended the stairs and took off their suits.

They entered the pilot house a moment afterwards.

The Sea Spider went on till darkness fell, and then came to the surface off the coast of Senegambia, along which she ran with the Cape Verdi Islands to the eastward.

A run of 800 miles followed without event, and three days later the Sea Spider was off the Grain Coast of Liberia.

Within three days more they would reach the Gulf of Guinea, for which they were bound, to commence their search for the wrecks of the old Spanish galleons.

"Unfortunately, however, a serious accident occurred to mar the even tenor of the trip.

The boat had just turned a jutting strip of land pretty close to the shore, late in the afternoon, when the fierce undertow caught it, and ere Jack was aware of their danger they were swept into the high surf.

The boy made a hasty and desperate effort to drive the boat out into deep water again, but he was too late.

A monstrous breaker caught the Sea Spider, and lifting it high in the air, it rushed in shoreward, and hurled the boat far up on the sandy beach.

The shock stunned the three adventurers and broke a great many things, and when they recovered and viewed the situation they saw that it would be a most difficult task to get the boat into the water again.

They were literally cast ashore!

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH TWO LIONS.

"Stranded!" exclaimed Jack in disgust, as he and his two friends went up through the trap in the deck and glanced around.

A short distance in back of the beach was a dense jungle of tall grass, bushes and trees, among which many stately palms upreared their crested heads, banana trees hung their mellow fruit over a gurgling brook of fresh water, and the vine-entwined foliage abloom with birds of gay plumage, and game of all kinds roamed about.

They decided to lay a plan, for the hunting was so good that they all were anxious to go for the abundant game.

Accordingly they armed themselves and sallied out. The first day's sport more than recompensed them for their trouble, for they secured enough fresh meat and fruit to stock the larder of the Sea Spider for a month.

The next day was spent at filling the water casks from the stream, and on the third day they went on an exploring expedition, armed to the teeth in event of any danger.

Directly in back of the beach was a high hill, on the crest of which a lake was impounded by a mass of fallen logs, from over which the brook came down.

"If those logs were to break loose," said Jack, pointing at them, "and the water should rush down upon us while we are outside of the boat it would drown us and carry our bodies out to the sea in an unguarded moment."

The barrier that held the lake back was very fragile, for the water-logged tree trunks, vines and shrubs were so rotten that but very little violence would be required to break it.

As they stood looking at the water there came a terrible shriek up in the tree in back of them, and the next moment down on Tim's head dropped a young monkey from the branches.

It was shrilly howling, and making desperate efforts to dislodge a large green parrot from its back, where the talons of the bird clung with a tenacious clutch, while with its sharp beak it bit with all its might on the monkey's tail.

Hoarse, guttural cries emanated from the mouth of the parrot that blended horribly with the squeaking of the monkey, and they fell to the ground between the adventurers, and began a fierce tussle, in which the monkey's fur and the parrot's feathers began to fly in all directions.

"Shiver me!" gasped Tim in amazement. "D'yer see that?" "Catch dem! Catch dem!" shouted Fritz.

So intent were the monkey and parrot on their fight that they paid no heed to the human beings until the Dutchman and the sailor swooped down upon them.

Then they separated.

As Fritz grasped the parrot, it fastened its beak in his finger and drew blood, and the monkey began to kick and scratch Tim until his hands were mangled and mangled.

Jack roared with laughter at the antics of his friends, as they struggled to keep possession of their respective prizes, but the sailor and the Dutchman were determined to succeed, and finally gained the mastery of the vicious creatures.

Tim then dropped to the ground, and held up his good leg. "Take off my boot!" he implored.

Jack pulled it off, and Tim then jammed the monkey into it, and Fritz, and closed the top with his hat.

"There ye little lubber!" he exclaimed angrily, as he shook the struggling monkey in the boot. "I've got yer stowed away safe enough so you' gol durn my skin if I don't anchor you around that boat with a cable as'll hold yer forever."

They had succeeded in getting the parrot in his pocket, and they then descended the hill to make a detour of the base, when they entered an open glen.

Just as they were going on in advance, and the wind was bousing out a present of getting the boat about, when suddenly

ly, and without warning, a tremendous figure leaped out of the undergrowth and struck him.

Hit squarely in the breast, the boy was knocked sprawling into the glen, and a cry of pain escaped him.

It was echoed by a thunderous roar that made the jungle ring, and sent a thrill of fear over him.

He cast one frightened glance at the creature, and saw, to his dismay, that it was a huge male lion.

"Tim! Fritz! Help!" he shrieked.

Tim and Fritz were half paralyzed with fear, but Jack's appealing cry aroused them.

"Fire at the beast!" shouted the boy desperately, as he drew both revolvers and sat up facing it.

Another thunderous roar pealed from the lion, and just as they all fired upon it it leaped for Jack again.

As quick as a flash the boy rolled over.

The wounded beast alighted beside him upon the same spot he had just occupied, growling and gnashing its teeth with pain from its wounds.

Again Jack aimed his two revolvers.

Crack! Crack!

Crack! Crack!

The four shots pealed out together, and every one hit the beast, knocking it over roaring upon the ground.

Up sprang Jack to his feet.

Again and again he fired at the snarling and writhing beast until every chamber of his revolver was emptied.

By the time he had discharged every shot the lion lay dead and quivering at his feet.

A great sigh of relief burst from the boy, and he cried:

"That settles it—the beast is gone!"

"Aye, now," yelled Tim, "but here's its messmate."

As he spoke there dashed into the glen the mate of the lion, a maneless creature, with a massive, lithe and active body of tawny brown, sniffing the air and roaring again and again, as it balefully glared at the three.

It bounded over to the corpse and circled around and around it, sniffing at its wounds and licking them, while a low, whining cry kept pealing from its ugly-looking mouth, as our friends retreated.

Then it suddenly turned upon the adventurers.

It seemed to realize that its mate was dead, and evidently blamed the three for the deed, for it rushed after them with flying leaps which bid fair to soon overtake them, when they turned and fired upon her.

The lioness paused with her head in the air.

An awful yell pealed from her foam-flecked lips, she staggered blindly a moment, and then fell dead with a ball in her brain from Jack's rifle.

They started back for the boat, glad to yet be living.

Within a few minutes they burst from the shrubbery upon the sandy shore, and were just about to go ahead toward the boat when they were brought to a pause by a thrilling sight.

The boat and shore all around it was swarming with nearly naked, armed negroes, who were doubtless hostile savages with whom they were bound to have trouble.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SAVAGES RELEASE A FLOOD.

The natives in possession of the boat were a band of Sereres who inhabit the seaboard of Senegambia and upper part of Liberia.

They were tall, robust fellows, with black and glossy skin, flat noses, thick lips, fat bellies, harsh features, and were tattooed all over.

Most of them were fetishists, treacherous, warlike, fond of plunder and fanatical in their superstitious religion.

Having investigated the interior of the boat and found it contained many things of great value in their eyes, they were holding a consultation upon what division they would make of the spoils when our friends appeared.

"The boat's in possession of the savages!" said Jack, aghast.

"Ay, now, here is a pickle!" groaned Tim.

"By attacking them with a rush and a bluster we might scare them away long enough to give us a chance to get aboard," said Jack. "Will you risk it, boys?"

"Lead on—we'll folly yer," said Tim.

A moment later the three made a rush for the boat, yelling at the top of their voices, and firing off their weapons as they ran, which attracted the savages' attention.

Down from the boat sprang the men who were upon it, and, startled and alarmed, they flew into the woods, leaving the three adventurers masters of the situation.

His ruse successful, Jack led his friends on board the boat, and they entered the pilot-house and pulled the steel shutters over the windows to protect the glass.

Then they indulged in a hearty laugh.

"The negroes were scared, thoroughly frightened," said Jack.

"An' no wonder," laughed Tim. "We made noise enough to wake the dead, an' this blamed monkey in the boat howlin' like mad, too."

"The savages may remain a while," said Jack, "but they can't stay here forever; so all we need do is to have patience, and in due time they will go away and we can then escape. In the meantime, you, Tim, keep a lookout at the deadlights on the port side, and Fritz can take the starboard, while I go aft."

"Ay, now, but first let me get a bit of line an' make fast to this monkey so I can get on my walkin' tackle."

He fished the little red monkey out of the boot, and the ugly little wretch fastened its teeth in his arm.

Securing it with a piece of string he took up his station and passed the time fooling with it and alternately peering out the barred and netted window in search of foes.

Jack stationed himself at the gun window, aft, from whence he had an uninterrupted view of the woods in the back.

Among the baobab trees, the diameter of which was 35 feet, he saw the negroes lurking, while the gigantic mampatas, growing 100 feet high, hid scores of them in their dense foliage.

The thickets and brushwood hid numbers of lurking forms at the approach of which marabout stalks, partridge, quail

and guinea fowl started up with frightened cries and flew away. Mango, mimosa, gonate, figs, orange, pomegranate and cocoas sheltered many of the blacks, and they sneaked among the tiamanol, dimbgnton and other edible fruit trees.

Here and there herds of antelope and gazelles sprang away in affright, crocodiles swam like logs at the mouth of the stream, hedgehogs, marmots and porcupines fled, and ugly chimpanzees nimbly disappeared, terrified at their approach.

The negroes were excitedly yelling to each other, and then they sent a shower of spears and arrows flying at the boat.

The poisoned darts broke like match splints against the flinty plates, and the savages became emboldened and sallied out.

Shower after shower of weapons was flung at the Sea Spider, and several hours passed by without any injury being done.

The negroes met with no response.

Encouraged at this they began to surround the boat, carrying loads of fagots which they heaped about it with the intention of burning the adventurers out.

Jack's patience gave out.

"I'll give them a send off they won't like if they try any such tricks as that upon me," he muttered.

And attaching a bright, copper wire to the poles of a battery he flung the other end out of a window he opened.

The African savages love wire better than anything else, and they at once seized it and made an effort to pull it out.

Fully fifty men had hold of the wire.

"Tim, pull around lever No. 7!" shouted Jack.

The old sailor did so, and a current passed into the wire. A terrific uproar arose among the savages.

They began to dance and yell, unable to let go the wire as the electric current shot into them, and within a few moments the whole crowd was so convulsed and terrified that they rolled and kicked, jabbering and struggling, and the ones who did not have hold of the wire became so scared they ran away.

They firmly believed that the inmates of the boat had bewitched their companions, and anxiously took out their fetishes and began to adjure them to give protection against all danger.

Jack and his friends enjoyed the discomfort of the savages for some time, and then stopped the current.

"We have given them fright enough," said the boy, "and now we can afford to let them go, eh, boys?"

"Ay, ay," chuckled Tim; "an' I allow as they'll give us a wide berth in future, gosh hang their ugly mugs!"

No sooner were the savages released when they fled in all directions, and Jack procured a spyglass and watched them.

Up the hill they went, tearing through the jungle, and not one of them paused until he reached the lake at the summit.

There they were in plain sight, and Jack saw them hold a consultation and point down at the boat.

Then they all vanished.

"It looks as if they have gone," remarked the boy.

"Twon't do 'em no good ter stay," said Tim. "Them 'ere weapings wot they've got ain't no good while we're aboard o' this craft."

Fritz had been glancing keenly up at the lake, and now cried: "Shiminey Christmas, looker dot!"

"What's the matter now?" asked Jack.

"You'll see soon enough."

"The savages have come into sight again."

"Fah, and der wings broken dot berrier down mit a tree."

"As soon as that water in the lake bursts through the

"Then it will come rushing down upon us. The blacks design
to drown us."

A sudden roar up at the lake interrupted Jack, for the logs
were impeded and were giving away before the water pressure.
Indeed a moment later the entire barrier broke away and
the volume of the pent-up water came roaring down the
valley bursting out the opening made by the savages.

The rushing, hissing mass of water rushed along like a
rolling, frothy avalanche, and swooped down upon the boat.
There came a frightful shock as it struck the Sea Spider.
Struck by the flood, the Sea Spider was swept from the
shores into the surf, and carried far out to sea ere she
was saved from the effect of the released water.

She soon righted herself and floated upon a level keel,
however, when our friends recovered themselves.

They hastily examined everything, and upon finding that
nothing was done beyond the loss of the searchlight, they
were all inexpressibly delighted at the termination of the
matter.

Within two days more they reached the coast of Guinea,
and now began to keep a sharp lookout for the cloven, vol-
canic island, the bearings of which Jack had outlined upon a
map.

The Alpha and Omega were reported to have foundered
about a league to the seaward of the island and directly in
line with it.

Toward the fall of night the boy examined his maps and
found that the island he was in quest of was situated at a
point of longitude 80 degrees and latitude 2, close upon the
equator.

It lay between Prince's and St. Thomas' islands, below the
main coast, and one more day's travel would bring them to
the spot.

The boy felt anxious, nervous and excited, for he was
about to ascertain whether the work he had so long been
engaged upon with his father had been in vain or not.

The boat went on all that night, all the next day, and
the next again engulfed in the ocean they came in sight of
the island they were searching for.

It was a small strip of ground, with a mountain upon it,
split in two at the summit, with smoke emanating from the
crater of an active volcano at the top.

"There is our landmark!" joyfully said Jack, pointing at it,
"and now, as we are a league to seaward of it, let us go down
and see what we can find my friend."

And moreover a jury, Jack sent the Sea Spider to the bottom
of the sea in quest of gold.

windows so that their brilliancy shot out all around the boat
and illuminated the sea all about for a great distance.

Like some fabled monster the boat sunk to the bottom in
a halo of streaking lights, and plunged into one of the
strangest spots on the face of the globe.

It was a veritable fairyland, for fantastic bushes bearing
living flowers abounded, the massive structure of meandrinas
and astreas contrasting with the branchy tufts of explanarias,
which blossomed in the form of cups, with madriporides of
elegant build and every-varying ramifications.

Cries of rapture burst involuntarily from the travelers' lips,
for all this marvelous manifestation of life was displayed in
the midst of the most rapid alternations of light and shade,
changing with every breath, and with every undulation that
rippled the surface of the sea, three hundred feet above.

"No earthly paradise can compare with this magnificent
scene!" breathlessly said Jack. "Oh, who on earth ever
dreamed of the marvels that are now floating before our
vision in such splendid array? This is wonderful—wonderful!"

"Ay, but whar is ther treasure ships, lad?" asked Tim.

"Have patience, my good friend, and in due time you will
see them. Our plan must be to find them."

"But you don't got de location of dem, ixactly?" asked Fritz.

"Of course not. Who can locate any place in the trackless
sea, where any object might sink? Who can account for
the current moving sinking objects—who knows when these
submarine tides change their course—who can tell what
eruption of the bottom may have taken place in centuries—
and who knows what fish, insects and sands may have
changed?"

"Dad seddles id," said Fritz.

"The only way to do," Jack went on, earnestly, "is to go
around in circles, in a coiling, serpentine manner, until we
explore every foot of ground within a radius of a mile of this
spot, and find the galleons."

"Ay, ay! That's ther plan," coincided Tim, with a nod.

This scheme was followed out, and all night long the boat
kept going in erratic curves, squirming about in every direction.

No one turned in, for they were all too eager and anxious
to even dream of sleeping or resting now.

Daylight came, but nothing was found.

A hasty breakfast was partaken of, and the search was re-
sumed and kept up all day, with no better success.

Tired out now, they returned to their regular watches, and
kept the boat in motion all the time, each one in turn intent
upon the eager hunt, yet, withal, gloomy and depressed, for
they kept meeting with nothing but disappointments.

A week passed by.

Not a trace of the ships was found.

During the centuries in which they had lain slumbering un-
derneath the bed of the sea, no doubt many changes had
been wrought in the configuration of the bottom which now
served to hide the wrecks from sight.

Jack was disappointed and exasperated.

He felt as if his friends held him in ridicule, and fancied
they thought his great treasures were a mere chimera.

He became down-hearted and broody, but he was filled with pluck, perseverance and determination.

Perhaps that was all that preserved him from sharing the disgust and skepticism that were growing on his friends, for he doggedly kept up the search, the baffling of one day making him more determined to do better the next.

And so another week passed by.

The boat ascended to the surface, took on a fresh supply of air, and went down again to resume its endless chase.

During all this time Tim and Fritz had been daily taming their pets, the monkey and the parrot, until they now could let them go roaming about the vessel without the least fear.

They were both intelligent creatures, and while Fritz split the parrot's tongue and taught it to speak a great many words Tim succeeded in showing the monkey a number of cute tricks.

He named it Whiskers, and Fritz called his parrot Bismarck.

One night Tim stood on watch at the wheel, alone, Jack and Fritz having turned in an hour previously.

Whiskers sat upon a camp-stool in back of the sailor, to all appearances fast asleep, but in reality his sharp, ferrety, little, twinkling eyes were slyly watching everything that transpired.

Tim got very sleepy, after a while, and bringing the boat to a pause he sat down upon a cushioned bench and began to nod.

Within a few moments he fell into a profound slumber, although he did not intend to commit such a breach of discipline.

His snores rang out like the blasts of a trumpet, and the monkey arose quietly and peered at him for a few moments.

Then it hopped upon the wheel, and, remembering what it had seen Tim do, it reached over to the switchboard, and grasping one of the levers, it pulled it around to its fullest extent without the least trouble.

The machinery was set in motion and the boat started.

Gathering speed each moment it soon went plunging ahead at a fearful rate, the noiseless machinery never disturbing the sleeper.

Delighted at its mischievous pranks, the little rascal swung the wheel back and forth with all its might, and began to chatter.

Around spun the wheel, suddenly, and Whiskers lost his balance, shot into the air and landed with a thud on Tim's head.

Startled into wakefulness, he started up and rubbed his good eye, when down to the floor hopped the monkey, and away he scampered, well knowing that he had done something he had no right to do.

Tim saw the boat dashing ahead, and realized what the monkey did.

Uttering an invective upon the mischievousness of his pet, he got upon his legs and glanced out the window.

To his alarm he observed an enormous mass of sand, mud and stone directly ahead of the boat, toward which it was plunging rapidly.

He grasped the lever and shut off power.

But he was too late.

The boat struck the heap with a crash, and the ram was jammed into a cleft in the rocks before he could stop the boat.

There came a fearful shock that stopped the Sea Spider and brought Jack and Fritz running out of the cabin to learn the cause of it.

Explanations followed, and they went out in diving suits and saw that the boat was wedged so fast they would have to blast her out.

Accordingly, Jack planted a bomb in the rocks and fired it by electricity.

A large portion of the heap was blown to pieces, liberating the boat.

But what was their astonishment to see that the blast disclosed the hulls of two old galleons that had been buried in the debris.

A hasty examination followed, and then Jack exclaimed:

"By jingo, boys, they are the treasure ships we are searching for!"

The monkey's caper had solved the mystery for them, and after satisfying themselves that they really were the Alpha and Omega, they at once began operations to secure the treasure.



CHAPTER XVII.

THE SHIP OWNER.

The Sea Spider came to anchor that night, and the three adventurers attired in their diving suits went aboard the wrecks.

The blasting bomb which released the ram of the Sea Spider from the rocks had laid bare all of the sternmost quarters of the two treasure galleons.

Rocks, sand and mud which had been covering them were scattered by explosion, and left the half-rotten barnacle-covered hulls easy of access to the divers.

Although several centuries had passed by since the Alpha and Omega foundered off the cloven isle, the debris that collected around them by the action of the tides had served to preserve the massive timbers from quick decay.

Indeed, when our friends went through one of the stern windows of one of the boats, they found that the wood inside was amply strong to hold them without breaking.

A quick search revealed the treasure.

Down in the hold were stored heaps of massive, iron bound strong boxes, covered with sand, rust and slime, and they were filled to overflowing with golden coins of ancient date.

Of course, the submarine boat was incapable of holding more than a quarter of the money and navigate, so they hit upon the expedient of marking the spot with a buoy and carrying the gold to the volcanic island, where they could secrete it until they could come back and get it to civilization.

As soon as the Sea Spider was laden with as much of the gold as she could carry, they prepared a white-painted keg, with an anchor, and ascended with the boat.

The buoy was left to mark the spot, and the boat started in toward the volcanic island.

They reached the shore within ten minutes, and found it to be a barren, desolate waste of rocks and sand.

Jack needed the Sea Spider for a tiny cove, and ran the boat in, when suddenly he was startled by the sight of a small coasting vessel apparently anchored under the lee of a frowning heap of rocks.

"This place won't do for us!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" demanded Tim, peering ahead.

"Because there are other people here to see what we do."

"Och! Dey stheal dot golt as soon as ve got away," said Fritz.

Slowly and earnestly they gazed at the boat, but not a sign of life was visible anywhere around her.

"She seems to be deserted," said Jack, at last.

"Ay, now, see thar—one o' her masts is gone."

"Dot wesel vhas a wreck," said Fritz.

They glided up to it and found that the young Dutchman told the truth, for the boat was laid wedged in some rocks with a hole stove in her bow.

"So much the better for us, then," said Jack. "If we can repair her, she can be laden with the biggest part of the gold, and we can carry the rest, and tow her to some port where the treasure can be sold. That will save us the trouble of making several trips to this island."

They went up to the wreck and boarded her.

She was not an old boat.

Moreover, they saw that if they could drag her from the rocks and patch her up she would just suit their needs.

"There is fully a week's work to be done upon her," said Jack; "but we can manage it if we succeed in floating her ashore."

"Aye, lad," assented Tim. "I'm right handy with carpenter's tools myself, an' am sure as we kin do ther job as it's a pin."

"Den ve pull her off de rocks mit de Sea Spider," suggested Fritz.

"Just what I was going to advise," assented Jack.

They made the hawser fast to the wreck, and securing the other end to the Sea Spider they started the submarine boat at speed, and kept at it till the cable was pulled taut.

She strained and tugged at the line, but the boat was wedged in the rocks so firmly that it would not budge.

Instead there sounded a sharp report like a pistol shot.

"The hawser has parted!" exclaimed Jack.

"Stop ther boat, or sh'll run ashore!" Tim shouted.

Jack just complied in time to save the boat.

"We will have to blast it out as we did the Sea Spider," said Jack. "She is too firmly wedged in the rocks to pull her out."

There was nothing on board of the wreck, for when the crew abandoned it they had taken everything away, so our friends knew that weight was not holding the boat back.

They ran up to the rock, and Jack planted a bomb there with an electric wire attached to it, with which the rock was promptly blasted, and they then pulled the boat away.

The rock was high fortunately, when they pulled her shoreward and pulled her alone with the Sea Spider till she

Then they laid to and waited for the tide to change.

As soon as the vessel laid high and dry they began to work on her, and, as Jack predicted, were kept busy a week before she was in fit condition to float safely.

Then they towed her out to their white buoy, and anchoring her to it they stored the Sea Spider's cargo on board of her.

Once more they went under the sea.

There the work of loading the Sea Spider was resumed, and bringing the gold to the surface, they stored it on the patched wreck with the first load.

Another week slipped by.

At the expiration of that time both galleons were stripped of their treasures, which were stowed on the wreck and on the Sea Spider for transportation to civilization.

Our friends were delighted when their work was finished.

"We will start now," said Jack, late one afternoon. "We have a good stout towing cable rove, and by coasting along we will soon reach a port at which we can sell our cargo, convert it into bills of exchange, and then start for home."

"We may run afoul o' some trouble, though, afore we makes port," said Tim seriously, "fer I've noticed as we're watched."

"Watched? By whom?" queried Jack nervously.

"Ther crew o' a ship. Werry likely a pirate."

"Why, are there pirates around here, Tim?"

"Pirates? Why, good Lor', lad, ther Gold Coast o' Guinea is allers a-swarmin' wi' ther blasted lubbers, which is ferever on ther lookout ter try an' run down ther traders wot gits gold dust from ther savages in exchange fer their cargoes."

"And has such a craft been near us?"

"Aye, aye, fer more'n two days I've seen a suspicious vessel a-hoverin' about off thar ter ther wind'ard, an' a-creepin' along shore as sly as a pickerel in fresh water."

Jack began to feel uneasy at this unwelcome news, but he said nothing and started his boat.

The Sea Spider had no trouble to tow the richly laden wreck along, and they made, according to his self-registering log, about twelve knots an hour.

The Sea Spider remained half submerged, for she thus traveled swifter, for the water offers less resistance to a boat than the wind on the surface.

Jack noticed the vessel Tim referred to following after them, and just as the following day dawned he made up his mind to go aboard of the vessel in tow for safety's sake.

This precaution was a wise one, for just as the sun was rising the strange ship sailed up to him, and a voice shouted:

"Ship ahoy!"

"Ahoy there!" answered Jack.

A man looking like a German appeared at the bulwarks.

"Where are you going with that boat?" he demanded.

"That's none of your business," retorted Jack tartly.

"Yes, it is. The craft belongs to me. She ran on the rocks at a volcanic island, and we abandoned her to get this vessel and go back and get her off. Now, you have stolen her!"

Jack started.

"Here's a pickle!" he gasped. "That fellow isn't a pirate after all, but he might just as well be, as he wants this craft, laden a-hole with gold. What to be done, I wonder?"

"You haul to," said the man threateningly, "and give up my boat, or we'll make it hot for you when we get aboard."

"I won't do it! You can't have the boat!" said Jack, who did not want to arouse the stranger's cupidity by letting him know that the vessel was laden with treasure.

"Then we'll force it away from you!" yelled the man. "The craft belongs to me, and we'll punish you for stealing it."

"To pick up an abandoned vessel for salvage is no theft," the boy retorted, "and you can't have it till after we take it to port."

"Well, we don't intend to pay any salvage for it."

"Sell the boat to me, then."

"No. Not for any price."

"What are you going to do about it, then?"

"Take it away from you by force!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE MILLION DOLLARS.

The ship came sailing over closer to the craft on the deck of which Jack stood, and the boy saw that there were a dozen men on her deck.

They were all armed, and looked like desperate people who would not hesitate at crime to consummate their designs.

"You won't make a bargain with me?" asked Jack.

"No. I only want my own property," came the reply.

"But there are reasons why I must refuse. When we reach some port we will pay you liberally for the use of this boat."

"I tell you again we won't make any agreement with you."

"Then you mean to fight?"

"Yes. I'll sink my boat before I let you keep it."

"Then I warn you to keep away, for we won't give it up."

"Rash boy! Don't you see my men are armed?"

"So are we, and I tell you that we will win in a fight."

"Bosh! Haul to, I tell you, or—"

But just then Jack went overboard and landed on the deck of the Sea Spider, which the others now saw for the first time, just riding above the sea's surface.

The expressions they dropped showed very plainly how surprised they were at the strange-looking boat.

As soon as Jack got within the pilot house of the Sea Spider he told his friends what had transpired.

"Shiver my topights, but this is a rum go!" said Tim, with a glum look. "They owns ther boat, hey? Waal, now, it are hard ter rob a man o' his ship right under his merry nose, but it's got ter be did, lad, cause if they takes ther vessel, they'll git all our gold along with it."

"Plow dem ouldt of de water!" said the pugnacious Fritz.

"I will if they still act unreasonably," answered Jack.

The other vessel sailed up close to the boat in tow and the crew flung over a grapnel line.

No sooner was it fast, however, when Jack cast off the tow-line, and dashed the Sea Spider between the two ships, cut the grapnel hawser with a knife, and circled around the treasure boat.

A yell of rage burst from the crew of the strange vessel, and they opened a gangway, displaying a twenty-pound gun.

"Confound you!" roared the skipper, "I'll sink your craft."

He aimed a gun at the Sea Spider and fired it, but the ball passed harmlessly over the spot where the submarine boat had been floating, for Jack submerged it just in time.

When the Sea Spider arose again, the boy shouted:

"You have opened an unprovoked fight, and now you must take the consequence. I'm going to sink your ship."

"Bah! We will blow you out of the water!" retorted the other, as his men began to reload their gun.

Jack saw that unless desperate measures were taken at once, the man would injure the Sea Spider.

So he left the wheel in Tim's hands, and running aft he ordered the Sea Spider swung around.

As soon as her stern was presented to the ship the boy aimed his gas gun, and fired a shot at the upper part of the stern of the ship.

There was no sound at the discharge save a sudden shriek of the ball, as it sped to its mark.

Then it struck just below the taffrail of the ship.

A large portion of the woodwork was blown away.

This manœuvre elicited a yell of terror from the crew of the other boat, and the captain and crew wildly rushed aft and examined the damage.

It was evident that the boat would not sink, but another such shot would bury it forever.

The captain saw it at a glance and yelled to Jack:

"Stop! For God's sake, don't fire again."

"Will you go about your business, then?"

"Yes, yes."

"Molest us no more?"

"No, I swear it!"

"Then veer off!"

"Aye, aye."

"He's scared!" laughed Jack.

"Aye, now, and so would any one be wi' ther hull starn blowed off his craft," grimly said Tim.

The stranger was turning his vessel, while some of his men were preparing to repair the damage, when Jack cried:

"If you want your boat you can have it in one week."

"Where am I to find it?" asked the captain of the other vessel in angry tones, as he glared at the boy.

"At Morocco, in Mogador."

"I shall go there."

The ship then hastily sailed away, every one aboard of her terrified at the awful gun carried by the mysterious-looking submarine boat, and our friends were left in possession of the boat.

"Victory!" exclaimed Jack in delight.

"You vant me to catch dot treasure boat?" asked Fritz, in anxious tones. "She vhas drift avay alretty."

"Yes, we must get her in tow again and hasten away, for the captain of that craft may make trouble for us if we don't. Now, Tim, stand by to lend Fritz a hand."

The treasure boat had drifted away some distance, and they hastened to secure the hawser again.

As soon as it was caught they made fast, and the machinery

of the Sea Spider was once more put in motion, and she was on her course again.

They soon left the defeated ship, hull down, astern, and in sight, sunk from sight entirely behind the horizon.

The Sea Spider then made rapid headway for its port of destination, and upon reaching the coast of Morocco, in due course of time, favored with extraordinary good weather, she made for the city of Mogador.

There was a shrine of Sidi Mogadul lying towards the south, half way to the village of Diabat, forming a striking landmark for seaman.

The harbor, although protected by a quarantine island, is extremely dangerous during a west and southwest wind, for it drives the sea about in such a manner that the seaport is almost turned into an island.

Tim had often been in this port, however, and easily piloted the boats into the harbor without danger.

There they were boarded by some Moorish officers, to whom they explained what their business was, and after some delay in the custom house, the officials of which Jack had to bribe heavily, on account of having no ship's manifest, he was allowed to go ashore to negotiate the sale of the gold.

He was informed that the Jews' quarter, called the Mellah, laid in the northeast corner of the city, and accompanied by Fritz, he made his way there.

The quaint old Moorish town, founded by the Sultan Mohammed, had fairly good houses, broad, clean streets, and but few gardens to break the barrenness of the vicinity.

Although the chief business of the place was in almonds, goat skins, gum, olive oil and ostrich feathers, there were Jewish bankers with whom exporters did an annual business of about \$1,000,000.

They were all reliable people, and Jack soon found one to whom he bargained to sell the gold.

During the ensuing week the three adventurers were kept very busy unloading it, and when the final sale was made, and notes of exchange were taken for it indorsed by the Government, our friends found that they had a trifle over one million dollars to divide.

The vast amount of money fairly made them delirious with joy, and they spent a week ashore getting over it.

The owner of the vessel they transported the gold in came sailing into the harbor at the expiration of that time, in search of his craft.

The three adventurers were startled.

"We should have left here sooner," said Jack as they hastened down to the water. "They may make it hot for us here now."

"Dey hel me got on board so gwick as vhas possible," said Fritz. "I don't vant me mine het shopped off by mineselef so soon as I got me dot money alretty."

"Good heul me, I do, but I'm a keered as we're too late," said Tim as they reached the water front. "See that?"

He pointed at the Sea Spider, and they saw the captain they had deserted and the chief harbor official standing on the deck of the submarine boat currently talking.

Following a shout, the belay pulled out to the Sea Spider, however, and went open the door.

The defeated captain scowled at Jack balefully.

"There he is now!" said he to the port officer. "Arrest him. He stole my vessel and I'm going to fix him for it."

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

The words of the captain showed conclusively that he meant to avenge himself upon our friends.

The port officer turned to Jack sternly.

"You are my prisoner!" he exclaimed.

"What for?" demanded the boy.

"Stealing this man's boat."

"Are explanations permitted?"

"None are wanted. The captain is an old friend of mine."

"Then we won't argue the matter."

"Of course not."

"I must, however, refuse to submit to arrest."

"Surely you are mad to do so, for revolt means death."

"Sometimes. It is now my command for you to leave my vessel."

"When we go you shall accompany us as prisoners."

"Boys!" exclaimed Jack, coolly, turning to his friends.

"Ay, sir," responded Tim.

"Drive these men from my boat."

Tim and Fritz were about to obey when the captain and the port officer drew their weapons.

It looked for an instant as if there was going to be bloodshed, but Fritz settled the difficulty much easier.

Getting behind the two officers he reached out his hands, and lurching himself forward, he gave them a push.

Taken unawares the two men lost their balance and their feet sliding from under them they slid down the concave hull of the boat, and landed with a loud double splash in the water.

There they floundered about, swimming to keep themselves afloat, and yelling for help at the top of their voices.

"Good boy, Fritz!" laughed Jack. "That was well done. But see, their cries have alarmed the people on the ships and on the shore."

"Wot's ter be did, now?" queried Tim, blankly. "Ther ship wot that captain came in is anchored in ther roadway wot we've got ter folly ter git out of this harbor."

"Und der grew vhas bringin' ower dem gun-boats, too!" exclaimed Fritz, with a frown. "By shiminy, ve vhas caught by a drap, und ve couldn't got ourselufs ound alretty!"

"There's no cause for alarm, boys," said Jack, calmly. "You seem to have forgotten that all we need do is to sink our boat and run away, under water, out of sight."

"Och, dot vhas so!"

"Then come inside before any hostilities can begin, and we will let the beggars make all their preparations to blow us to glory, and then skip, laughing at them."

They went down through the trap door, and once in the pilot-house saw the two men swimming with might and main for one of the gun-boats, and yelling to every one to prevent

the escape of the strange boat, and blow it to pieces with their guns.

To remain upon the surface any longer was extremely dangerous, so Jack turned one of the levers, the air was compressed from the lower compartments into the upper, and the sea water filled the empty reservoirs.

Then down dove the Sea Spider, disappearing from the view of the astonished Moors.

The water was brackish and muddy, for a dangerous west wind was sweeping the seas in and inundated the shores, making underwater navigation very hazardous.

"There may be hidden rocks and other obstructions in our way around here that we know nothing about," said Jack, "so we will have to proceed with the utmost care to avoid danger. Tim, you steer, and I'll keep a lookout while Fritz goes below and keeps his eyes on the machinery."

Jack had a peculiarly arranged spyglass by means of which he could see through the sea water at daytime, and with this thing at his eye he kept a keen lookout, while Tim steered the boat forward.

Several masses of rocks were encountered which were easily avoided, as the Sea Spider went ahead slowly and in due time they passed the headland in safety and ran out into deep water.

Then they put as much distance as possible between themselves and the City of Mogador, shooting along the coast to the northward at the rate of twenty knots.

"Safe at last!" exclaimed Jack, breathlessly, when they were out in deep water again. "We are very fortunate, boys, for our gold is all disposed of, our pockets are lined with money, and now we have accomplished what we set out to do, let us cross the Atlantic for home and friends."

"Ay, ay, lad, that we will!" cheerily assented Tim.

"Hooray for us vonct!" yelled Fritz.

"Ah-h—come off!" screeched Bismarck. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiskers began to chatter and squeak furiously at the parrot, and our delighted friends a moment after were singing a rollicking sea song, while Fritz played it upon his accordion.

The Sea Spider dashed ahead, and, retracing her course, she once more pointed her sharp ram to the westward, and breasted the rolling Atlantic.

We will not dwell upon the trip across the ocean, for it was not marked by anything of interest or excitement save the changes in the weather.

Suffice it to say that within a week she made the voyage, and carried our gallant friends safely back to New York, when they all went ashore.

The drafts of the banker of Morocco were presented for payment at the agency in Gotham, were honored, and made payable on demand.

Jack then made a division of the money, despite the protestations of his friends, and they each received an equal share and deposited their money in banks.

Remaining a few days in New York, they once more boarded their singular vessel, and, under cover of the night, she started up the East River, homeward bound.

It was broad daylight when the Sea Spider reached the bay

of Wrightstown, and rounding the headland shot in toward the village.

A sad drowning accident had occurred there, which brought all the villagers to the waterside, and their astonishment was intense when they beheld the Sea Spider.

A tremendous cheer burst from every lip as Jack went out on deck and sent the Stars and Stripes fluttering up to his masthead, for they never expected to see the boat again.

Up to the dock dashed the Sea Spider, and when she came to a pause and was moored there, the three friends leaped ashore and were met with an ovation.

Questions by the score were asked them, and Jack gave the crowd a graphic account of their adventures from beginning to end, and in conclusion the three adventurers displayed their bank books to verify their story.

Jack was the hero of the hour.

Tim and Fritz, with their parrot and monkey, came in for their share of the applause, and when every one was satisfied, they boarded the Sea Spider and went up the creek with her to Jack's old workshop, in which she was locked.

The faithful old housekeeper, who had been in charge of the boys' old home, was delighted to see them, and lavished the most extravagant praises upon them.

It was then Jack's intention to revolutionize Wrightstown.

In order to carry out other inventive plans he had in view, he had his old workshop torn down and a newer and more elaborate brick building put up in place of it.

He also built a magnificent house on the site of his old home, and as Tim and Fritz determined to stick to him, they each built houses for themselves close to Jack's.

By the time the boy's plans were all finished, he had one of the most elegant and complete places of its kind in the world in which he evolved many extraordinary inventions.

His friends, too, each started great manufactories of their own, entailing the employment of an army of people, and Wrightstown rapidly grew from a village into a very handsome town owing to the enterprise of the three adventurers.

The boy inventor frequently used the Sea Spider after that on many pleasure trips under water in company with Tim and Fritz, but newer ideas eventually suggested themselves, and he soon began to invent other marvels of a similar nature.

And thus employed, we will leave him for the present, trusting that we may, at a near date, be enabled to meet him again with an invention that will surpass the Sea Spider and the wonders it exposed.

[THE END.]

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